

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, April 30, 2004

**Remarks at a Victory 2004 Reception
in Coral Gables, Florida**

April 23, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you.

Audience members. Four more years!
Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. *Vamos a ganar.* Thank you all for coming. For those who don't speak Spanish, that says: We're going to win. And one reason why is because we've got such great support here in south Florida.

I'm honored you all came out today. I can't tell you how grateful I am to see the grass-roots so excited. *[Laughter]*

I picked a pretty good man to be the chairman of the State of Florida for my campaign. I consulted with my mother. *[Laughter]* I said, "Who do you think would be the best man to carry the Bush banner here in Florida?" She said, "Why don't you turn to the Governor?" *[Laughter]* I said, "Okay." You've got a great Governor in the State of Florida. He's a good man. He really makes us proud.

We had a great day today on the west coast of Florida. I was talking about how to increase the wetlands so that our environment is stronger. I reminded Jeb that when I make a promise, I meant it. When I said, "There's not going to be any drilling offshore of Florida," I meant what I said.

I want to thank my friend Armando Codina for his leadership. He's been a long-time friend, and I thank him for convincing you all to support this candidacy and this campaign. I want to thank my friend Al Hoffman and Al Cardenas.

Today I've been spending some quality time with a Member of the United States Congress, Mario Diaz-Balart. *Adonde esta, Mario? Adonde esta?* Thank you, Mario. I'm glad you brought your brother, Lincoln, here today too. Thank you, Lincoln. There's Lincoln back there. And Ileana is with us today.

Adonde esta, Ileana? Ahi. Stand up, Ileana. *[Laughter]*

These three Members of the Congress are strong and steadfast. They're great Members of the United States House of Representatives. They care deeply for our country. They care deeply for a free Cuba. They've been strong supporters, and I'm proud to call them friends.

I'm sorry that the First Lady isn't traveling with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. No, I know it—I know it. She's campaigning in Tennessee. Tennessee got the better deal. *[Laughter]*

But I'm really proud of Laura. She is a fabulous wife, a wonderful mother, and a great First Lady for our country.

I'm looking forward to the campaign. I really am. I look forward to bringing our message to the American people. It's a positive message. It's a hopeful message. It is an optimistic message of what I believe is possible. I will campaign and present a vision to the American people as to how to win the war on terror and how to continue to spread freedom and peace throughout the world.

I will continue to campaign on a positive vision to make sure that we expand prosperity to all corners of our country so every single citizen has the chance to realize the great American Dream. I'm looking forward to the campaign. There's no doubt in my mind we will carry Florida, and we will win on November the 2d.

I put together a great administration to serve the American people, people from all walks of life, men and women who care deeply about the future of our Nation. And thankfully, I have put together a good administration, because we have been tested. We've shown the American people that we know how to lead.

Once you remember the history of the last 3 years—when we came to office, this country was headed into a recession; the stock

market had begun to decline. But we acted. We passed historic tax relief. We let people keep more of their own money, and as a result, the economy is strong, and it is growing stronger.

When we came into office, we had to confront corporate citizens who did not tell the truth to their shareholders and their employees. It was a problem for our Nation, but we acted. We passed tough laws. And now it is abundantly clear that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

When we came to office, when Dick Cheney and I came to office—Dick Cheney is the greatest Vice President our country has ever had. Mother heard me say that one time and she said, “Wait a minute, buster.” [Laughter] But when we came to office, our military was growing dispirited. It wasn’t receiving the resources it needed. So we strengthened our defense budget, and today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

And we were attacked on that September day in 2001. The enemy hit us. They hit us because of what we love. See, we love freedom. They hate freedom. The enemy came to our shore. They declared war on the United States of America that day, and war is what they got. We’ve been on the offensive against this enemy. We’re chasing them down one at a time to bring them to justice. We will use every resource at our disposal to protect America. And once again, this Nation is proud to lead the armies of liberation. Fifty million people are now free, thanks to the United States of America and our coalition.

I have made it clear where I stand. I have spoken clearly to the American people and to the world. And when I say something, I mean it. And that’s important for a leader. It’s also important for a leader to understand the responsibilities of leadership. My job is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations.

I’m looking forward to the campaign. I’m looking forward to it. I’m running against a fellow who has been in Congress a long, long time, so long that he’s taken just about both positions possible on every issue. [Laughter] He was for the PATRIOT Act. He was for the No Child Left Behind Act. He was for

NAFTA. He was for the use of force in Iraq. Now he’s against the PATRIOT Act. He’s against NAFTA. He’s against the No Child Left Behind Act. He was against my decision in Iraq. He’s been on both sides of just about every issue. If there was a third side possible, he’d take it. [Laughter]

Not only have we confronted problems; we have delivered. We’ve delivered results for the American people. This economy of ours is growing stronger every day—every single day. Think about what we’ve overcome. We’ve overcome attacks. We’ve overcome war. We’ve overcome scandal. We’ve overcome recession. Yet I can tell you, the economy is strengthening. GDP growth is strong. Manufacturing activity is up. Homeownership is at the highest rate ever in American history. More minorities own a home today than ever before, and that is positive news for America.

Our economy is adding new jobs now. Remember, we had 308,000 job increase in March; 750,000 jobs since last August. People are finding work. Things are getting better. We acted, and as a result, this economy is improving. That’s good news. That’s real good news.

But there’s more to do. One of the things that’s important for a person running for office is to constantly talk about what we intend to do. See, I’ve got a vision to make sure our prosperity is lasting prosperity. We’ve got to make sure we’re a nation that doesn’t wall us off from the rest of the world. We must reject economic isolationism. We must open up markets for U.S. products. Listen, if you’re good at something, you want to be selling things in the world. For the sake of job creation and lasting prosperity and prosperity, I will work to open up markets for U.S. goods so people can find work right here at home.

In order to make sure we have lasting prosperity, we’ve got to have a legal system that is fair. There’s too many junk and frivolous lawsuits that penalize small-business owners here in America. We need tort reform. In order to make sure that we have lasting prosperity, we’ve got to do something about health care, the cost of health care. What I will not do is allow the Federal Government to run the health care system of America.

I'm for—I strongly support health savings accounts to empower consumers in America. I'm for association health care plans to allow small businesses to pool risk, so they can better afford insurance for their employees. And we need medical liability reform at the Federal Government.

We need an energy plan. We need more energy in this country, and we can do so without drilling off the coast of Florida. We're too dependent on foreign sources of energy. We need to encourage conservation. We need new technologies to make us less dependent. But one thing is for certain, we need to use the resources that are at our disposal so that we're not dependent on foreign sources of energy. For us to have lasting prosperity, the Congress needs to get me an energy bill to my desk this year.

In order to make sure we have lasting prosperity, we better make sure our folks are educated. There's all kinds of new jobs being created, and sometimes the skill sets of our workers don't match those jobs. Good education, by the way, starts in the early grades.

I passed the No Child Left Behind Act. It's a strong piece of legislation. It says that every child can learn; every child has the potential to learn. We're going to stop this business about just shuffling our children through the schools. You see, what happens is, if you just give up on kids, like oftentimes happens, you wake up at the end and people can't read and write and add. You can't be a country with lasting prosperity unless every child learns to read and write and add and subtract. In return for Federal money, we're now insisting that States measure. See, we want to know. We want to know if a child can read and write, and if they can't, they're going to get extra help early. The No Child Left Behind Act is an important part of making sure this country is literate and strong.

And as our economy grows and changes, we better make sure that our workers are reeducated. I put out what we call the Jobs for the 21st Century plan, which utilizes community colleges more actively. It says to the community colleges, "Here's some Federal help so you can train people for jobs which actually exist." Technology is changing our world. We'd better make sure our workers have the skills to fill the jobs of the 21st

century. If we want to have lasting prosperity, we've got to have an education system that works, an education system that enables our workers to fill the jobs that are being created here in our country.

In order to make sure we have lasting prosperity, we need certainty in the Tax Code. Listen, we did good work on the tax relief package. We increased the child credit. If you've got a family, we made it easier for you to raise the family. We reduced the marriage penalty. What kind of Tax Code is it that penalizes marriage? [*Laughter*] We're not interested in penalizing marriage in America. We're interested in encouraging marriage in America.

If you paid taxes, you ought to get relief. Instead of trying to pick or choose winners, if you pay taxes, you get relief. The tax relief we passed helped our small businesses all across America. It was an incredibly important part of the vitality of our economy, because most new jobs are created by small businesses and entrepreneurs. No, the tax relief we passed came at the right time. It's working, and in order to make sure we have lasting prosperity, we need to make the tax relief permanent.

And finally, in order to make sure we have lasting prosperity, the Federal Government has got to be wise about how we spend your money. See, it's your money, not the Government's money. We've got to be wise about how we spend it. We need fiscal discipline in Washington, DC. We need to be willing to set priorities and meet those priorities.

The problem in the campaign, of course, is that the tendency is to overpromise. My opponent has done a good job of that. He's already promised over a trillion dollars of new spending. See, the temptation is to get in front of audiences and promise here and promise there. I've submitted a budget which cuts the deficit in half over 5 years. He's begun to make those promises. There's no audience that he's not willing to make a promise in front of.

But we're adding up the money. There's over a trillion dollars, and he says he's going to pay for it by taxing the rich. The problem is, there's not enough money in taxing the rich to pay for the promises. You know what it means he's going to do? He's going to tax

everybody in America. The good news is, we're not going to let him, because I'm going to win in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. There are big differences in foreign policy, during the foreign policy debates. I've got a clear vision as to how to protect America and to spread freedom and peace throughout the world. We're still at war—we're still at war. It's important for the President to understand the stakes. I understand the enemy. They're ruthless. They're coldblooded. They're trying to frighten us. They're trying to shake our will. This country must be determined, must be strong, and never relent to the killers.

I will use all the tools at my disposal to protect America. We'll work with other nations to protect America. We'll share intelligence. We'll use our great military. We'll do everything we can. My most solemn duty is to protect America from the enemy. That's why I created the Department of Homeland Security, to better share information, make sure our borders are better protected. The best way to protect America is to stay on the offensive, is to find them. There is no cave or hole deep enough to hide from justice of America.

We're making progress against Al Qaida. Two-thirds of the known leaders have been captured or killed, and we'll get the rest of them with time. It's a matter of time. It's a matter of will and strength and determination and time. I'm telling you, we've got a fabulous military. For those of you who have got a loved one in the United States military—for those of you with a loved one in the military, you tell them the Commander in Chief is incredibly proud of their service to our Nation.

Right after September the 11th, I told the world that "if you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." When the President says something, he better mean it. I meant it, and the Taliban found out what we meant. This was this barbaric crowd that was running in Afghanistan. They were providing safe haven for Al Qaida. They were providing training camps for Al Qaida. They not only did that, but they were incredibly repressive. Young girls were not able to go

to school in Afghanistan, but thanks to the United States and our coalition, not only is America more secure, not only is the world more secure, but young girls now go to school, many of them for the first time in their life.

Another lesson of September the 11th is that when we see a threat overseas, we must take it seriously. When we see a gathering threat, we can no longer hope oceans protect us from harm's way. I looked at the intelligence and saw a threat in Iraq. The United States Congress looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat in Iraq. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat in Iraq.

I took the threat seriously as your President. I knew the world had changed after September the 11th. I took the threat seriously because I remembered the facts—not only the intelligence said something, but Saddam Hussein used weapons of mass destruction on his own people. Saddam Hussein invaded countries in his neighborhood. Saddam Hussein paid suiciders to kill Israelis. Saddam Hussein had ties to terrorist organizations. I took the threat seriously and went to the United Nations Security Council.

I said to the United Nations Security Council, "For nearly a decade, you have said to Saddam Hussein to disarm, and now is the time for your words to mean something. But if you won't disarm him, we will lead a coalition to do so." The United Nations Security Council, if you remember, acted. On a 15 to nothing vote, they sent this clear message to Saddam Hussein, "Disarm, or face serious consequences." Saddam Hussein, once again, decided to deceive the world. So I was presented with a choice: Either trust the word of a madman or defend America. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

My opponent voted for the use of force in Iraq. He just didn't support my decision to get rid of Saddam Hussein. Perhaps he was hoping that Saddam would lose the next election. [*Laughter*]

We acted. We acted, and there are no longer mass graves and torture rooms and rape rooms in Iraq. We acted. Because we acted, Libya got the message and have now voluntarily decided to disarm. Because we

acted, freedom is rising in the heart of the Middle East. Because we acted, the world is more peaceful and America is more secure.

There is a debate going on about when the President must take action to defend America. Listen, we'll build coalitions, and we have. There's over 30 nations in Iraq helping us now. We've got nations in Afghanistan helping us. We're working closely with our friends and allies who understand the stakes.

But let me make this very clear to you: I will never allow leaders of other nations to determine the national security issues of America. We have tough work in Iraq. It's been tough weeks for America. It's been tough weeks for those who have got loved ones in the Iraq theater. And there's a reason why, because we're making progress toward freedom, and the enemies of freedom want to stop us. They want to shake our will. They'll kill anybody in their way in order to try to get us to leave.

But the stakes are too high for us to leave. This is an historic moment. You see, a free society will be a peaceful society. A free society in the heart of the Middle East will begin to change the world for the better. No, they're trying to shake our will, but America will never be run out of Iraq by a bunch of thugs and killers.

We will keep our word to the Iraqi people. There are thousands in Iraq who long for freedom. See, freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty's gift to each man and woman in this world. That's what we believe. That's what we hold dear here in America. That's something we will never forfeit. And therefore, the United States and our brave troops and allies will continue on the offensive, continue implementing our strategy, and we will win this essential battle in the war against the terrorists.

We believe in freedom not only in Iraq, but we believe in freedom in our own neighborhood. My foreign policy—I've got two words for my policy—two words for my foreign policy for Cuba: *Cuba Libre!*

Audience members. Viva Bush! Viva Bush! Viva Bush!

The President. We will keep the pressure on the tyrant. We want the people of Cuba

to hear this message loud and clear: We will make no concessions to tyranny; we believe strongly in freedom; we will insist upon their human rights, their God-given rights; we stand strongly with the freedom fighters and the island of Cuba.

As well we believe in a democratic and free Haiti. Our quest for freedom is around the world. Good foreign policy is a foreign policy that insists upon freedom in our own neighborhood. Good foreign policy is a policy that insists upon freedom in parts of the world where there's hatred and the lack of hope. That's why I will continue to work, so long as I'm President, for a vision of peace based upon the cornerstone of free societies, and we will succeed.

And finally, I will continue to work for a culture which says that each of us is responsible for the decisions we make in life. See, I want to help to change the culture from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for what we do.

See, if you're a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart. That's your responsibility. It is your most solemn and important responsibility to love your children. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. Just don't hope that Washington, DC, solves problems. Get involved with your schools here in Miami, Florida, and insist upon quality of education for each child. Support your teachers. If you're in corporate America, if you're a CEO, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees.

And finally, in a responsibility era, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves. Listen, the strength of this country is the citizens of this country, the hearts and souls of the people. That's the true strength of America. We're a compassionate nation. We're a decent nation. We're a nation of many people bound by freedom and a nation of many people who care deeply about their neighbor.

I met Donna Huck today when I got to the airport. She's a volunteer. She's a soul

who said, "What can I do to make my community a better place?" So she works at the Children's Hospital here. She cares about children. She's lending her love to help heal the broken heart of the sick. I call to you here in Miami, as I do around America, and say, "If you want to serve your Nation, feed the hungry, mentor children, provide shelter for the homeless, reach out to the lonely, and together, we can change America one heart, one conscience, one soul at a time." No, the strength of this country is the great people of America, and it is my high honor to be the President of such a fantastic country.

Thanks for coming. May God bless. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:31 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Al Hoffman, finance chairman, Republican National Committee; Al Cardenas, former chair, Republican Party of Florida; Representatives Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and President Fidel Castro of Cuba. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7775—Jewish Heritage Week, 2004

April 23, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Jewish Heritage Week commemorates the rich history of the Jewish people and the many contributions Jewish Americans have made to our Nation. This year marks the 350th anniversary of the first permanent Jewish settlement in North America, in what is known today as New York. We honor the courage and perseverance of these Jewish immigrants and their descendants, and we celebrate their steadfast dedication to the ideals that make America strong.

Through their stories of tragedy and survival, the Jewish people demonstrate their unyielding faith and share with us the important truth that even in the face of terrible tragedy, hope endures. Many Jews came to America in search of a land of freedom and opportunity, and we must work to preserve

their stories for future generations. The lessons of these stories are timeless and help guide us through the challenges ahead.

Over the past three and a half centuries, Jewish Americans have helped shape the history and culture of our Nation. As scientists, physicians, social workers, educators, artists, businessmen, and in many other professions, Jewish citizens have contributed to the strength of our country. Their commitment to religious freedom, respect for diversity, and belief in democracy have enriched our society and helped make America a better place for all. During this historic time, we are particularly grateful for the many Jewish Americans who serve in our military. Their efforts help advance the cause of freedom and provide hope for people around the world.

As we observe Jewish Heritage Week, we remember the proud legacy and determination of the Jewish people and their strong dedication to faith, family, and service.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 25 through May 2, 2004, as Jewish Heritage Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs and activities that highlight and honor the contributions Jewish Americans have made to our Nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:27 a.m., April 26, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 24, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on April 27.

The President's Radio Address

April 24, 2004

Good morning. This week I celebrated Earth Day by traveling to Maine and Florida to visit some of this Nation's vital wetlands.

From the Gulf of Maine to the Gulf of Mexico, Americans are blessed to live amid many incredible wonders of nature.

We no longer take those wonders for granted. We understand our responsibilities to the natural world to conserve and make better what we have been given. Wetlands are among our most important natural resources. They provide a habitat for wildlife, trap pollution, reduce the impact of floods, and provide recreational opportunities.

For many years, our Nation has sought to slow the loss of our wetlands. We've made tremendous progress. And on Earth Day, I was proud to announce a new goal: Instead of just limiting our losses, we will expand the wetlands of America.

To accomplish this objective, my administration will work to restore, improve, and protect at least 3 million acres of wetlands over the next 5 years. This new wetlands policy reflects an enduring national commitment, carried forward by both parties, to protecting the environment.

We're taking action to ensure cleaner air. Since Congress passed the Clean Air Act of 1970, major air pollutants have been reduced by nearly 50 percent. My administration is building on that progress by implementing smarter ways to raise standards and improve air quality.

The clean air interstate rule, based on the Clear Skies legislation I sent to Congress last year, will reduce the major causes of ozone and fine particles by 70 percent. This rule employs a market-based approach called "cap and trade" to reduce air pollution that crosses State borders.

We're also completing an important new rule to remove sulfur from diesel fuels. Just as regulations to remove lead from gasoline have helped cut pollution in the 1970s, our new diesel rule will reduce harmful emissions from generators, tractors, and other diesel vehicles.

Finally, we are regulating mercury emissions from powerplants for the first time ever. Under our new proposal, mercury emissions will be cut by approximately 70 percent.

All these rules are based on sound science and good economics, and they will help every American breathe cleaner air.

We also have a responsibility to be good stewards of the land. Two years ago, I signed legislation to clean up more of the abandoned and polluted industrial sites known as brownfields. Between 2001 and 2003, we restored over 1,000 brownfields to usable condition, more than were restored in the previous 7 years. Our efforts have opened usable land for small businesses and residents in hundreds of communities across the country and created more than 25,000 jobs in cleanup and redevelopment.

Another critical environmental priority is the health of our Nation's forests. In recent years, millions of acres of forests, rangeland, and communities have been destroyed by wildfires. So last December, I signed the Healthy Forest Restoration Act to reduce the risk of fire, save lives and property, and improve the health of our forests. The law opens millions of acres of forest land to vital thinning projects. And by expediting the environmental review process and directing courts to consider long-term threats to forest health, the law allows us to protect more of our Nation's precious forests.

In the past three decades, America has made great strides in honoring the ideal of conservation and living by high standards of stewardship. My administration's environmental efforts uphold that legacy. In the past 4 years, America's air, land, and water have all gotten cleaner. Our new proposals build on that progress and help us advance toward our national goal of a cleaner, safer, healthier environment.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:35 p.m. on April 22 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Message on the Observance of Armenian Remembrance Day, 2004 *April 24, 2004*

On this day, we pause in remembrance of one of the most horrible tragedies of the 20th

century, the annihilation of as many as 1.5 million Armenians through forced exile and murder at the end of the Ottoman Empire. This terrible event remains a source of pain for people in Armenia and Turkey and for all those who believe in freedom, tolerance, and the dignity of every human life. I join with my fellow Americans and the Armenian community in the United States and around the world in mourning this loss of life.

The United States is proud of the strong ties we share with Armenia. From the end of World War I and again since the reemergence of an independent Armenian state in 1991, our country has sought a partnership with Armenia that promotes democracy, security cooperation, and free markets. Today, our Nation remains committed to a peace settlement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and is grateful for Armenia's continuing cooperation in the war on terror. By advancing understanding and goodwill, free nations can help build a brighter future for the world. Our country seeks to help Armenia expand its strategic relations with the United States and our European allies.

Generations of Armenian Americans have also strengthened our communities and enriched our Nation's character. By preserving their heritage, faith, and traditions, Armenian Americans enhance the diversity that makes America great.

I commend individuals in Armenia and Turkey who have worked to support peace and reconciliation, including through the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission, and call on Armenia and Turkey to restore their economic, political, and cultural ties. I also send warm wishes and expressions of solidarity to the Armenian people on this solemn day of remembrance.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks to the American Association of Community Colleges Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota

April 26, 2004

Thanks for the warm welcome. Jessie, thanks for letting me come by and share some thoughts. You picked a great place to have a convention. What a great city Minneapolis is.

I—Jessie's right. I spend a lot of time at the community colleges around the country because I see the community college system in America as such a hopeful place, a place where people can gain the skills necessary to become employable, a place where people can gain the skills necessary to realize dreams. The community college system is accessible, and it's affordable, and it's flexible. It's a major asset of our country, and I want to thank those of you who are here who are leaders in the community college system around the country. I want to thank you for your dedication. I want to thank you for your spirit. I want to thank you for your vision, and I'm here to say thanks on behalf of all of America.

Not only do I want to talk about the role of community colleges in our society today, but I want to talk about the role of community colleges in the out-years as we promote a new generation of American innovation. I'm going to talk about the need for us to develop an energy policy that is based upon new technologies, new hopes, that will enable us to become less reliant upon foreign sources of energy and, at the same time, continue to improve our environment. I want to talk about the use of information technology to improve medicine and to make sure we keep the patients at the heart of the health care system. And I want to talk about affordable broadband technology so that America can stay on the leading edge of technological change.

First, Jess, thanks for leading this august group. He's *Tejano*. Nothing better to be in

the presence of a *Tejano*. Jess told me coming in here that—I asked him where he was raised. He said, “Southern California.” He said he didn’t speak English when he came to America at age five. His dad had big dreams for him, and here he is, years later, introducing the President of the United States in perfect English. It speaks to the great hope of America, doesn’t it? It speaks to our great society that says to Jess’ dad, “You can realize your dream here. You can raise your son. Your son can be educated and rise to an important position in making sure America is an educated society.” Jess, I appreciate your determination, but I really appreciate the determination of your good father to see that you have a chance to succeed in the greatest Nation on the face of the Earth.

I want to thank George Boggs, the president and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges, for hosting us. I know you’re going to honor my friend Rich Carmona, who is the U.S. Surgeon General. Rich is a graduate of the community college system. He’s an interesting guy. He’s doing a heck of a good job for us. I’m proud that he has agreed to serve our Nation, and I’m proud of the fact that you’re honoring him. You’ve made a really wise choice. And whoever the judges are to decide that Rich was the right person, congratulations on such good judgment. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank the Governor, who has joined us today. The Governor is a backer of the community college system here in Minnesota. Governor Pawlenty is doing a great job for the people of this State, and I’m proud you’re here, Governor. Thank you for coming.

I also want to thank Norm Coleman, the United States Senator. He flew down with me today on Air Force One. I’m not suggesting he was looking for a comfortable ride—*[laughter]*—but he got one. *[Laughter]* He’s a good fellow who’s serving the State of Minnesota well, as are Jim Ramstad and Mark Kennedy, Members of the United States Congress. I really appreciate you all taking your time to come and honor the crowd here today with your presence.

I want to thank the speaker of the house, the majority leader of the statehouse here

in Minnesota for coming. I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. It’s awfully nice for you to come out and spend a little quality time with your President. *[Laughter]*

I want to congratulate the 2004 New Century Scholars who are with us today. Thanks for aiming high. Thanks for working hard. Thanks for setting standards. And congratulations on achieving one goal in what I hope is a productive and happy life.

I also met a woman—lady today named Melissa DuBose. She is a high school student. She showed up at the airport, and she’s there because I love to herald soldiers in the army of compassion. I love to point out to people these heroic stories of citizens who are trying to make the community and world a better place.

You know, oftentimes we talk about the strength of America, and one of our strengths is our military. I intend to keep it strong. Another strength is the fact that we’re a wealthy nation, and that’s good. That’s important. But the true strength of the country is the hearts and souls of our citizens. That’s the real strength of America. Our real strength is because we’re a compassionate nation where people have heard a universal call to love a neighbor like you’d like to be loved yourself.

Melissa DuBose is such a person. She travels to Honduras to help people in orphanages. What a lovely spirit that is, isn’t it, a high school student here in Minnesota spreading love and compassion for those who need it in Honduras. Melissa is just one example of many in this community who help feed the hungry, find shelter for the homeless, mentor a child, or helping to change our country and our world one soul at a time. I don’t know where Melissa is. Where are you, Melissa? There you are. Why don’t you stand up. Thanks for coming, and God bless your work.

We have the strongest economy of any major industrialized nation in the world. And that is—it’s an amazing statement, when you think about what this economy and our country has been through. And the reason I bring that up is because I know how important the entrepreneurial spirit is. I know how important education is to the future of this country,

and I believe it was the spirit of America and our education system, in part, that helped us overcome the challenges we face.

We faced a recession. And those are tough times, obviously. They're tough times for workers looking for work. They're a tough time for small-business owners who are worried about whether or not there will be capital available to expand. It was a very difficult period.

There will be an argument as about why the recession was shallow. Of course, I believe it was shallow because people had more money in their pocket to spend, which made the recession one of the most shallow in American history.

And then, as we were recovering from that recession and a stock market decline, the enemy hit us, and that obviously affected us. Our economy lost nearly one million jobs in just 3 months after the attacks. Remember, the stock market shut down, airplanes weren't flying. It was a very difficult period. It was also difficult for our psychology because it was the first time we realized that we were a battlefield.

For years, when we grew up—at least us baby boomers grew up—we thought that oceans would protect us from harm's way. And then we learned a solemn lesson on that day. We learned the lesson that there is an enemy which hates us because of what we stand for. Because we love freedom, because we value freedom, because we work for free societies, there's an enemy which is willing to inflict harm. The enemy also is the kind of enemy we've really never faced before because they're willing to kill innocent women and children and men of all religions in order to affect our psychology.

So September the 11th was a tough hurdle to overcome. We will overcome it because we're a strong, resolute nation, and we will overcome it by staying on the offensive and bringing these killers to justice before they harm America again.

And as we were recovering from that, we faced corporate scandal. I don't know if you remember the period—I clearly do—that we were beginning to recover, and CEOs in corporate America didn't tell the truth, which shook the confidence of this country. In other words, these people weren't respon-

sible citizens. They didn't tell the truth to shareholders. They didn't tell the truth to employees, and it hurt. We passed tough laws. We said, "There will be a consequence if you're not a responsible CEO in corporate America." We made it clear that we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America, and the people in America are now beginning to see justice being done.

But we've overcome that hurdle. And then, as you know, I made a decision to protect the country against further harm. One of the lessons of September the 11th is, is that when we see threats, we must deal with them before they fully materialize. That's one of the lessons that our country must never forget about September the 11th. We can't hope a problem goes away anymore. We must deal with it.

See, my most important job is to protect the country. That's my most solemn duty, to make sure as best as we possibly can that the harm done to our citizens doesn't happen again. I saw a threat in Iraq. The Congress looked at the same intelligence and saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the same intelligence, and they said, "There's a threat."

So I went in front of the U.N. and said, "Why don't we do something about it now? The man has ignored you for 10 years. For the sake of world peace, why don't we do something about it?" People felt that way, of course, because he had used weapons of mass destruction on his own people. They remembered that. They remembered he invaded his neighborhood. They remembered he paid suiciders to go kill Jewish people. They knew that he had relations with terrorists. We all saw a threat, and he hid. He said, "No, I'm not going to listen to the demands of the free world." So faced with trusting a madman and hoping for the best or working to make sure America's more secure, I will always make the decision to keep America secure.

And that's what we're doing today. We're acting to make sure the country is secure, and it's hard work. Our military is performing brilliantly. We must defeat enemy there so we don't have to face them here. But we're working for something bigger than just security, short-term security. We're working for

free society in Iraq. You see, a free society is a peaceful society. A free society in the midst of a region of the world where there's hatred and intolerance will be a historic moment for change for the better.

I shared a story the other day during a press conference where I talked about a dinner I had with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan, and we're eating Kobe beef. I don't know whether it's grown here in Minnesota or not—real good. And it dawned on me in the course of our conversation that had we not gotten the peace right after World War II that I don't think I—it's possible I wouldn't have been sitting with the Prime Minister of Japan talking about how to make the Korean Peninsula more peaceful. See, we're talking about North Korea. We're talking about the dangers of the North Korean dictator having a nuclear weapon, what it would mean for world peace. And then it dawned on me in the course of the conversation that one of these days, an American President will sit down with a duly elected leader in Iraq—from Iraq, to talk about how to bring peace to that troubled part of the world.

These are historic times. It's a historic opportunity to spread peace and freedom. I believe that freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world, and free societies will be peaceful societies.

The reason I brought that up is I want to put it in perspective, put these statistics in perspective. The economy is strong, and it's getting stronger. We've overcome a lot. I happen to believe it's because of progrowth economic issues, but I also know it's because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, the small-business sector of America is strong, and there's great opportunities in this country. Retail sales are strong. Interest rates are low. Homeownership is at the highest rate ever, which is a fantastic statistic, when you think about it.

I mean, ours is a society in which we encourage people to own something. When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the country. We want more people owning their own home. The minority homeownership gap, while it still exists, is getting better. We want everybody to own a home,

not just a few, not just those who live in suburban America. We want homeownership to be a vital part of the future of our country.

Durable good orders are up. Industrial production in the first quarter rose at the fastest pace in nearly 4 years. In other words, things are getting better. There's renewed confidence. When people invest in equipment, it makes—it means it's more likely somebody is going to find work, and that's what's happening. There are new jobs available.

But the problem we face in the short term in America is some workers do not have the skills necessary to fill the new jobs. There are jobs being created during this period of economic transition. And yet, there are willing workers who don't have the skill set necessary to fill those jobs. And I think you'll find in different communities around the country, there are people looking for nurses or teaching or different technology fields of technology.

And you know who knows this best? The community college system understands it best. You know, the people closest to the situation in each community are those who can best devise a strategy to meet the growing demand for workers and the need to make sure the workers have the appropriate skill sets.

I was in Forsyth County Community College in North Carolina, where former textile workers are now getting the skills to work in biotechnology. There's these people, worked in one industry; the industry became noncompetitive; and the Government stepped in and helped. As you know, there's ample programs for worker displacement monies to help pay for community college.

But the most important thing that happened was that the community college administrators went to the local employers and said, "What do you need? If you're looking for workers, what do you need?" And they changed curriculum to meet the needs of the employers in that community, and people are now getting the skills necessary to work.

The River Community College in Florida is opening a new center next May to provide cutting-edge training in robotics, in lasers, and phototonic technology. In other words, there's a demand for these kind of workers,

and what the community college system does is it provides a fantastic opportunity for job training, for new educational opportunities. In Illinois and Ohio, community colleges have joined efforts to train workers to fill high-tech jobs in the manufacturing sector.

So the first thing I want to say is, thanks for what you're doing to make America a more hopeful place. Thanks for providing an opportunity for somebody who says, "The job I used to work in is beginning to be transitioned out as our economy changes," and "Help me get the skill sets necessary to be employable."

I'll never forget meeting a lady in the Mesa Community College. And she was a graphic design artist, and she wanted to gain skills necessary to get—make more money. She understood that with education, you become a more productive worker. She also said—understood that productivity increases means higher pay. And so she went to the community college. She got an associate's degree. She got out. She got employed by a high-tech company. And she made more in her first year in her new job than she had made in her last year as a graphic artist.

See, not only does the community college system help somebody get employed, they help somebody to become a more productive worker. And there's a lot of talk about productivity in our society. Productivity provides interesting and important challenges. First of all, the more productive your workforce is, the faster your economy has to grow. See, if you've got—if a worker can produce more goods and services per hour than in the past, in order to add new workers, the economy has to grow faster than productivity. And it's a challenge.

And that's why we can't become isolated from the rest of the world. We've got to reject economic isolationism. That's why we've got to have good legal policy. That's how we've got to make sure that the small-business sector is vibrant. That's why we've got to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong.

But it also is the reason why the community colleges are important for the future. Because if productivity is necessary for employment, it is the community college which helps the citizen become more productive.

But it's also the community college which helps a citizen make more money. Productivity increases lift the standard of living for citizens in our country. After all, since 2001, the after-tax income of Americans has climbed by 10 percent—over 10 percent. Part of it has to do—is our workforce is more productive and the people of the community college system are making a vital contribution.

Now, as we encourage innovation and change—and I'm going to talk about three ways to do so—but as we do so, as we make sure America can compete in the world by fostering new technologies, it is always important to remember the vital role education plays in our society. I mean, technologies change, but the vital role of education never changes.

And it starts with making sure that when somebody goes to a community college, they can actually read and write and add and subtract, which is why we've got to get it right in the early grades in America. The No Child Left Behind Act is a vital, important piece of legislation, and I'll tell you why. For the first time, in return for Federal money, we have asked this fundamental question: Can you read and write and add and subtract? Are you teaching our children the basics? We've increased Federal spending by 49 percent for public schools since I got sworn in. And what's changed is, we're now saying, "Show us whether or not a child can read, and show us early."

Now, if you believe every child can read, then you're willing to ask the question, "Show us if they can read." If you believe they can't, then you're willing to accept a system that just quits on kids early and shuffles them through. And guess who gets hurt—parents who may not speak English as a first language, inner-city black kids. It's easy to walk into a classroom full of kids—"difficult to educate," they call them—and say, "Let's don't measure. Let's just move them through and hope we get it right."

See, I think that's backwards. I think our society has got to challenge what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. I think we've got to raise the bar for every single child. And the best way to determine whether or not we are succeeding is to insist that States

measure, to show us whether or not a child is literate.

I've heard every excuse in the book about not measuring. "Oh, you can't teach the test." You can teach a child to read, and they can pass a literacy test. "Oh, you know, we're testing too much." How do you know whether or not a child is moving through the system and can't read if you're not willing to say, "Let's be accountable"?

Now, I think accountability is the cornerstone for making sure that we have a literate society. In the No Child Left Behind Act, there's money available to help students early, before it's too late. We have got to stop this business about social promotion. We've got to be able to say, "Here's a problem. Let's solve it early. Let's make sure there's additional money to focus on the kids so we don't have a pipeline full of illiterate children." No, the No Child Left Behind Act is raising the bar and raising the standards, because I believe and I know you believe every child has the potential to learn.

Now, you've got to recognize there are some kids who have been shuffled through, and that's why we need intensive intervention in middle schools and high schools. And so I'm working with Congress to pass the Striving Reader and Math Initiative program, and that's a fancy word for saying we're going to intervene quickly with struggling middle-class—middle grade and high school students. Listen, you can't, in a community college system, expect to be able to do your job if you spend a lot of time on remedial reading programs. We've got to get it right early, and we will get it right early.

And at the same time, in order to make sure that we've got the skill sets necessary for what is a changing world and a changing economy, we need to focus on math and science in our public schools. And we've got a shortage of teachers in the public schools, and so we've laid out a program to encourage scientists and engineers from the private sector to teach in the public school.

We've got to reform the Perkins Act, which is a vocational training program, which didn't emphasize the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century; it emphasized one aspect of job training. But there needs to be math and science as a part of the Per-

kins Act of the vocational training, so that the citizens who are coming out of high school can be worked with to make them available for the jobs of the 21st century.

The Pell grant program is a vital part of making sure that people have the skill set necessary for the jobs of the 21st century. My budget increases the number of students receiving Pell grants. We've increased the number by a million since I took office. Four hundred thousand of those, 40 percent of those, are for the community college system here in America. Pell grants are a vital aspect of making sure that we meet our fundamental obligations to provide people the skills necessary for the jobs that will be available. I proposed an extra \$1,000 per year in enhanced Pell grant scholarships for students who take a rigorous high school curriculum. In other words, there ought to be incentives for people to do better. We ought to be raising that bar, not lowering the bar.

We ought to be increasing standards. We ought to be expecting the best of every student in America. I proposed a Presidential Math and Science Scholarship Fund to give scholarships in those fields to low-income students. In other words, what I'm telling you is, is that in order for us to be a society which is able to compete, in elementary school and in high school, we must raise the standards.

As well we must support our community college systems. The community college systems provide great opportunity for people to go from high school to community college to a higher education. That's important. The community college system also provides great opportunity for people who never went to college, who have worked, to go back and get a degree in order to help make themselves more productive.

And so, as Jessie mentioned, I proposed to Congress a \$250-million program to help community colleges form partnerships with local businesses. This is a practical way to help people find work. It's a practical way to make sure the skill set matches the jobs of the 21st century. I think this will help train 100,000 more people a year. It's a way to keep America on the leading edge of change. You can't change as a society if you don't have a workforce that is capable of working in the new jobs of the 21st century. That's

what I'm telling you, and the community college system provides the capacity for us to have the skill sets necessary in our workers.

I know many of you have been involved with the Workforce Investment Act. It needs to be changed. Listen to this statistic. We spend \$4 billion a year on the Workforce Investment Act and pay—that money paid for about—training for about 200,000 adults. It doesn't seem like we're getting—something may be wrong there. *[Laughter]* We can do a better job with the money we're spending.

So I laid out a reform package, that we've got to give States more flexibility. You see, flexibility means you're more able to match—you hear me say that; I'm going to keep saying it until we get it right here in America, until you match the willing worker with the skill sets necessary to be employed. That's what flexibility means. If you're inflexible in your system, it means you miss opportunity; it means you're not able to design a curriculum that meets the needs of the local community. It means that opportunity goes by. There needs to be a strict cap on overhead costs. If you're spending \$4 billion and 200,000 are trained, some of it is not going for the worker. It may be going to pay administrative costs. And there needs to be a strict cap.

We need to make sure there are clear results. You've heard me talk about results in the public school system. I think people need to be measured. I think we need to say, "What are the results?" If it's 200,000 for \$4 billion, the results aren't good.

Right now, there are so many goals, there are no goals. If you're involved with the Workforce Investment Act, you know what I'm talking about. There's all kind of measurement standards. The primary measurement standard is: Are you using taxpayers' dollars in a good way to train people for jobs. That ought to be the standard. See, that's where our focus is.

America leads the world because of our system of private enterprise and a system that encourages innovation, and it's important that we keep it that way. See, I think the proper role for Government is not to try to create wealth but to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit flourishes.

That's what I love about the country, the entrepreneurial spirit.

I'm sure you've met in your communities small-business owners who had the big dream, started out with an idea in a garage, and now, are employing people. That's what we ought to encourage, and the proper role of Government is to foster that kind of environment. You've heard me talk about ways to do so, make sure that we're—we reject economic isolation and make sure tax policy encourages innovation and growth, and to make sure the legal system is fair—listen, frivolous lawsuits make it awfully difficult for people to expand their businesses and people to find work—make sure the health care system is vibrant and patient-oriented. I'll talk about that in a minute.

The Government can help as well, though, by providing research scholars. I mean, one of the things we've got to recognize is that if we want to be competitive in the future, that we've got to encourage research and development so that the next wave of technology is America's wave of technology. In other words, if we want the people to be working here at home, this country's got to stay the leader in innovation and change, and the Government can help.

I proposed raising Federal spending on research and development to \$132 billion since I—from—it's a 44-percent increase since I came in office. Look, that's a big number, but what I'm telling you is, is that the Government can be a vital part of providing the research that will allow for America to stay on the leading edge of technology.

I think we ought to encourage private sector companies to do the same, to invest in research. And therefore, I believe the tax credits that are critical for encouraging of research ought to be a permanent part of Tax Code. They're set to expire. Congress ought to make tax cuts permanent.

But what I'm telling you is, there is a vital role for our country to make sure that we put investment in place that will make it easier for the country to compete in a worldwide economy and, therefore, make it more likely our citizens will find work so long as they have the skill set necessary to match the jobs.

Now, I also want to talk about three other goals of ways to make sure that we're the

innovative society of the world. First, you know, we need a different energy strategy than the one we have today, a strategy that uses technology and innovation to diversify our supplies, to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy, and to improve the environment.

The debate in America on energy policy has been almost zero-sum, when you think about it. It's like, they say that we must protect the environment and therefore have less energy, or they say that pollution is the price of progress. See, I disagree with either of those extremes. I think that we can use our technology and innovation to get beyond the false choices of the past and that we can have an energy policy that is—meets our national objectives, which, by the way, is an innovative society. You can't be an innovative society if you're stuck on foreign sources of oil. You may be short term, but long term, I don't see how we can be the world leader if we're constantly dependent on foreign sources of oil.

So research and development is necessary to change the energy policy of the country. And you say, "What do you mean?" Well, I believe it's possible to grow our way out of some dependence on foreign sources of energy. I mean, I can't wait to see the day when Minnesota farmers are out there harvesting corn that becomes an integral mix of the energy supply of the country. So we've got research and development to encourage biomass and effective ethanol—the use of ethanol as a part of the new supplies of the American economy.

I think we have to have safe nuclear energy. I think we ought to be continuing to research and spend research dollars to make sure that we're able to properly harness nuclear energy without harming the environment. I think it's possible we do so.

I also know that we've got a plentiful supply of coal in our country, and that's why it's important for us to continue to explore clean coal technologies, so we can use the energy supply here at home in a way that is—achieves, in a national objective, diversifying away from foreign sources of energy and protecting our environment. Technology and research will enable us to do so.

I want to talk about one other aspect of promising technologies, and that is the hydrogen fuel cell, which captures energy from chemical reaction between hydrogen and oxygen. See, it captures energy from a chemical reaction between hydrogen and oxygen. That's positive because the exhaust of that engine is water. It's—and I'm confident we can achieve this technological breakthrough to the point where I've asked Congress to spend \$1.2 billion, which they have, in research into developing clean hydrogen powered cars.

We are making progress on hydrogen fuel cells, and that's positive. Private companies, including automakers—see, automakers are beginning to see what the future is going to be like. They're beginning to see the need for diversification away from the current energy policy. They've already spent a billion dollars of their own money to develop hydrogen fuel powered cars and the infrastructure necessary to deliver hydrogen fuel.

See, one of the challenges is not only developing a car that works but imagine the infrastructure changes necessary to fuel cars 10 years from now. One of the things consumers like is they like to go to their neighborhood gas station. When you hear talk about development of infrastructures like go to your neighborhood hydrogen station—and that's going to be a difficult hurdle in order to make sure that we've changed behavior here in America, but it's a hurdle that we've got to overcome. It's a necessary hurdle.

Today the Department of Energy has selected recipients for \$350 million of research grants. In other words, the administration is now acting upon the Congress' appropriations. They're funding research into practical hydrogen fuel storage—so not only how you distribute it, how do you store hydrogen. They're encouraging the construction of hydrogen refueling stations around the country. We're beginning to change behavior. And they're helping scientists develop hydrogen fuel cells that can be used in heavy trucks and farm equipment and other industrialized vehicles.

See, when we get it right here, when we get the hydrogen car up and running, not only will it make America a better place, we'll become the innovator of the world. That's

what we want to be. We want to be the leader in the world. We want to be the country that leads the world in innovation and technological change.

Another way we can do so is to make sure the health care system leads the world in innovation and quality and safety, always remembering, however, that the patient needs to be at the center of every medical decision. That's an important part of the—[*applause*].

Many of you have seen the advances of—close hand of medical research. Just think of some of the advances that are coming. We're using a gene chip technology to help for cancer treatments. The world is changing dramatically in the field of medicine in many exciting ways. We're using brain imaging to discover the physical causes of mental illness. We're using tissue engineering to restore damaged or diseased tissues. And these are all incredible changes, and America is on the leading edge of change in medicines. And we need to keep us that way.

But one of the things that hasn't changed very much is the way doctors and hospitals do business. The 21st-century health care system is using a 19th-century paperwork system. Doctors use paper files to keep tracks of their patients. Pharmacists have to figure out the handwriting of a doctor. [*Laughter*] Vital medical information is scattered in many places. X-rays get misplaced. Problems with drug interaction are not systematically checked. See, these old methods of keeping records are real threats to patients and their safety and are incredibly costly. Modern technology hasn't caught up with a major aspect of health care, and we've got to change that. We've got to change it.

Catch the story of a fellow name Bob Brown from Kalamazoo, Michigan. Maybe this will help people better understand why we need to change. Bob's daughter Elizabeth developed a rare form of leukemia. She had a complicated case, and she had to see a lot of doctors. All told, Elizabeth—that's the daughter's name—regularly visited three hospitals and saw more than 50 specialists. Here's what Bob said about the paperwork that he had to deal with: "Every time we saw a specialist, we answered the same questions." He got fed up, and he started getting copies of every note that a doctor added to

Elizabeth's medical file. Eventually, he filled up two big binders with her medical records, which he carried everywhere he went so she didn't face delays or mistakes when she saw a new specialist. He says that fortunately, carrying those files around helped in his case. It helped get Elizabeth the treatment she needed in a faster way.

The problem is, is that he shouldn't be having to carry around the binders. The system is antiquated. It is old. They should have personal electronic medical files available that accurately and securely keep a patient's medical history and, in Elizabeth's case, her treatments. In other words, medicine ought to be using modern technologies in order to better share information, in order to reduce medical errors, in order to reduce cost to our health care system by billions of dollars. To protect patients and improve care and reduce cost, we need a system where everyone has their own personal electronic medical record that they control and they can give a doctor when they need to.

And so you say, "How do we do this?" Well, first you set a goal: Within 10 years, every American must have a personal electronic medical record. That's a good goal for the country to achieve. The Federal Government has got to take the lead in order to make this happen by developing what's called technical standards. In other words, there needs to be standards. As you know, docs talk, like, different languages in different offices, and there needs to be—in order to have uniformity, there needs to be standards available, and it's a good role for the Federal Government. That will allow medical records such as X-rays and lab tests to be stored and sent electronically.

So step one is to set the standards. And we've done good work, and we'll try to finish the standards by the end of this year. I say "we"—it's the Department of Health and Human Services that are involved with this important project. We've set out money to encourage demonstration projects that will show to health care providers the need to use electronics to make their records system more modern.

As well there's the senior department that we've announced today at the Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate

these efforts with hospitals and medical groups. In other words, a proper role for the Government is to take the lead in this case, and after all, we should. We spend enormous amounts of money in the health care field. I mean, we're a large provider—spender for health care, Medicare, Medicaid, veterans' benefits, employee benefits. And so the Federal Government must create the incentives for health care providers involved with the Federal Government to use medical records and, in doing so, will go a long way toward introducing IT, information technology, into a part of medicine that desperately needs it.

As we do so, I want to repeat what I said earlier. Patients will have control over their privacy. I fully understand there's a issue of privacy, and the people who ought to determine the extent of privacy, their privacy, of course, is the patient, the consumer.

The third goal is to make sure that we have access to the information that is transforming our economy through broadband technology. I'm talking about broadband technology in every part of our country. I was the Governor of Texas for a while. I remember talking about access to information, and there was always a group of people saying, "That's fine. Big cities get it, but rural people don't." I'm talking about broadband technology to every corner of our country by the year 2007 with competition shortly thereafter.

Educators understand the great value of broadband technology. I mean, the—I'm not surprised that people involved in the community college system, when you mention broadband technology, nod their heads. It's the flow of information and the flow of knowledge which will help transform America and keep us on the leading edge of change. And we've got to make sure that flow is strong and modern and vibrant. And by the way, we've got to make sure that there's competition for your demand. We need more than just one provider available for not only community colleges but also for consumers. In our society, the more providers there are, the better the quality will be and the better the pricing mechanism will be.

Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte is using broadband to conduct classes for students all across their State. You know, one of the interesting opportunities for

the community college system is to provide education opportunities for people who work out of their home, for example. And the expansion of broadband technology will mean education literally will head into the living rooms of students. That will even make the system more flexible and more available and more affordable.

Same with health care. Again, if you're from a State where there's a lot of rural people, there's nothing better than to be able to transfer information quickly from a rural doc to a hospital for analysis in order to save lives. It's happening all around our country. The ability to send an X-ray image in 7 seconds and have a response back in 10 minutes with a preliminary analysis oftentimes will save lives. But you hear us talk about making sure health care is accessible and affordable. One way to do so is to hook up communities and homes to broadband. It's going to be a really good way for us to make sure the health care system works better and the education system works better. And it also is going to be an important way to make sure that we're an innovative society.

Now, the use of broadband has tripled since 2000 from 7 million subscriber lines to 24 million. That's good, but that's way short of the goal for 2007. And so—by the way, we rank 10th amongst the industrialized world in broadband technology and its availability. That's not good enough for America. Tenth is 10 spots too low, as far as I'm concerned.

Broadband technology must be affordable. In order to make sure it gets spread to all corners of the country, it must be affordable. We must not tax broadband access. If you want broadband access throughout the society, Congress must ban taxes on access.

Secondly, a proper role for the Government is to clear regulatory hurdles so those who are going to make investments do so. Broadband is going to spread because it's going to make sense for private sector companies to spread it so long as the regulatory burden is reduced—in other words, so long as policy at the Government level encourages people to invest, not discourages investment.

And so here are some smart things to do: One, increase access to Federal land for fiber-optic cables and transmission towers.

That makes sense. As you're trying to get broadband spread throughout the country, make sure it's easy to build across Federal lands. One sure way to hold things up is that the Federal lands say, "You can't build on us." So how is some guy in remote Wyoming going to get any broadband technology? Regulatory policy has got to be wise and smart as we encourage the spread of this important technology. There needs to be technical standards to make possible new broadband technologies, such as the use of high-speed communication directly over powerlines. Powerlines were for electricity; powerlines can be used for broadband technology. So the technical standards need to be changed to encourage that.

And we need to open up more federally controlled wireless spectrum to auction in free public use, to make wireless broadband more accessible, reliable, and affordable. Listen, one of the technologies that's coming is wireless. And if you're living out in—I should—I was going to say Crawford, Texas, but it's not—maybe not nearly as remote. [Laughter] How about Terlingua, Texas? There's not a lot of wires out there. But wireless technology is going to change all that so long as Government policy makes sense.

And we're going to continue to support the Federal Communications Commission, Michael Powell—Chairman Michael Powell, under his leadership, his decision to eliminate burdensome regulations on new broadband networks availability to homes. In other words, clearing out the underbrush of regulation, and we'll get the spread of broadband technology, and America will be better for it.

I've come today to talk about practical ways to make sure we lead the world when it comes to innovation and change. And by leading the world when it comes to innovation and change, we'll make America a hopeful place for those who want to work and those who want to dream and those who want to start their own business.

And the community college system is an integral part of that strategy. That's what I'm here to tell you. It's an integral part so long as you're willing to listen to the needs of those who are looking for workers. It's an integral part so long as you continue to be

entrepreneurial in the delivery of education. The community college system is a cornerstone of good economic policy. It's a cornerstone of sound educational policy. And it's one of the reasons why I'm optimistic that America will lead—continue to lead the world when it comes to innovation and change. And that will be good for our people. That will be good for the revitalization of what I call the American spirit and the American dream.

I want to thank you for what you do. I appreciate your compassion. I appreciate your interest in the future of our country. May God continue to bless your work, and may God continue to bless our country. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:29 a.m. at the Minneapolis Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Jesus "Jess" Carreon, chair of the board, and George R. Boggs, president and chief executive officer, American Association of Community Colleges; Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Memorandum on Improving Rights-of-Way Management Across Federal Lands To Spur Greater Broadband Deployment

April 26, 2004

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Improving Rights-of-Way Management Across Federal Lands to Spur Greater Broadband Deployment

Broadband, also known as high-speed Internet access, has the potential to bring new services and products to American consumers and businesses, fostering innovation, investment, and job-producing economic growth. My Administration has long recognized the economic vitality that can result from broadband deployment and is working to create an environment to foster broadband deployment. All Americans should have affordable access to broadband technology by the year 2007.

A key to widespread broadband deployment is ensuring that broadband providers have timely and cost-effective access to rights-of-way so that they can build out their networks across the Nation. These networks often need to cross large areas of land owned or controlled by the Federal Government. Thus, effective and efficient Federal rights-of-way policies and practices are critical for promoting broadband deployment.

To ensure that the Federal Government's rights-of-way policies and practices facilitate the aggressive deployment of broadband networks, my Administration created a Federal Rights-of-Way Working Group composed of representatives from most of the major Federal agencies with land management responsibilities. The mission of the Working Group was to identify and recommend changes in Federal policies, procedures, regulations, and practices that would improve the process of granting rights-of-way for broadband communications networks on lands under Federal jurisdiction.

Based on information gathered from the communications industry, the Federal agencies, state, local, and tribal representatives, and other stakeholders, the Working Group has produced a report entitled, "Improving Rights-of-Way Management Across Federal Lands: A Roadmap for Greater Broadband Deployment," which sets forth specific recommendations in four main areas.

- (1) Information Access and Collection—to streamline and standardize applications to reduce the administrative burden and costs on broadband providers.
- (2) Timely Process—to speed Federal agencies' consideration of rights-of-way applications.
- (3) Fees—to ensure that fees charged by Federal agencies are reasonable and appropriate.
- (4) Compliance—to ensure that Federal agencies have the proper tools to promote compliance with rights-of-way grants or permits.

These recommendations are designed to assist Federal agencies in efficiently and effectively performing their vital role as stewards of the public lands, while working coop-

eratively with industry to spur broadband deployment.

Therefore, I hereby direct the heads of executive departments and agencies (agencies) to take appropriate actions to implement the specific recommendations contained in the report to the maximum extent practicable and as permitted by law.

In addition, agencies should review their existing policies and procedures and identify any additional ways to improve the process for granting rights-of-way for broadband communications networks. Agencies should report to me, through the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, within 1 year of the date of this memorandum on all actions taken. The agencies shall take these actions using existing budget authority.

George W. Bush

Remarks in a Discussion on the Benefits of Health Care Information Technology in Baltimore, Maryland *April 27, 2004*

The President. Thanks a lot. Thanks for coming. Please be seated. Thanks for the hospitality. I'm really pleased to be here in the great city of Baltimore. Governor, I'm proud you're here. Thanks for greeting us at the airport—I mean, at the heliport. Thanks for bringing the first lady. Thanks for bringing the Lieutenant Governor as well. I'm proud you all are here.

I'm also proud to be with—in the presence of a man I still call Governor, Governor Schaefer. I'm proud you're here, Governor. He said he didn't care a whit about seeing me. He just wanted to make sure I gave his best to Mother. [*Laughter*] Still a plain-spoken fellow, aren't you?

But Governor, thanks, you're doing a great job for the State of Maryland, and congratulations on the newest Ehrlich.

Dutch Ruppersberger is with us today. Congressman, where are you? Oh, thanks for coming. Listen, I'm—here's the thing about the Congressman: He cares deeply about the people who wear the Nation's uniform. He's very much involved with programs to kind of lighten the load for our troops who are sacrificing and are working for a free world.

Dutch, I'm proud of the job you've done. I know you've recently received the USO Merit Award. Well deserved, and congratulations. Thank you for doing that.

I want to thank George Owings and Larry Kimble, who are veterans affairs folks here for the State of Maryland. One is incoming. One is outgoing. Both care deeply about the veterans of this State. I appreciate so very much Nelson Sabatini, who is department of health and human services here in Maryland, for caring about the health delivery systems of your State.

We're going to talk about some interesting opportunities today for our health care system to be modern, to deliver—help it deliver quality service at lower cost. This is going to be—I think you'll find it an interesting dialog. I'm certainly looking forward to it.

Before we begin, though, I want to thank the people who work here at this hospital, work for the VA. I appreciate your service to our country. I appreciate your care for those who have worn the Nation's uniform. I see we've got folks here who have worn and are wearing the Nation's uniform. For those who have worn the Nation's uniform, thank you for setting such a good example for the brave men and women. For those who are wearing the Nation's uniform, I appreciate so very much your service.

We're changing the world. We have an obligation and a duty to protect our country. And in so doing, we're changing the world for the better. We understand that freedom is the deepest need of every human heart and that free societies are peaceful societies. And a peaceful society in the heart of a region that has fostered terror and hatred is in our short-term and long-term interest. And for those who wear the uniform, thanks for what you're doing. You have stepped up at this historic time. And the country is more secure for it, and the world will be more peaceful for your service.

Yesterday I talked about ways for us to make sure America stays on the—stays a leader in the world, particularly when it comes to technology and innovation. That's what we want. We want to lead. We're not interested in following. America is a nation where the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, where the focus of the Government, in my

judgment, is right. We're willing to spend research money. I see Elias Zerhouni is with us, who's head of the NIH. Elias, thanks for coming. I'm confident that when you spend research money at the NIH, we're laying the groundwork for what will be a better tomorrow.

Yesterday I talked about energy. One way for us to stay on the leading edge of an innovative society is to introduce ideas like a hydrogen-powered automobile, put money behind it and research behind it so someday, Governor, we're able to drive around with water as the byproduct, as opposed to that which is currently coming out of the tailpipes in America. It'll make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy when this technology comes to be, which is vital to make sure America is on the leading edge of technology and innovation. It'll help improve the environment.

I talked about the need for us to spread broadband technology throughout our entire society if we want to stay competitive and innovative, that we've got to have broadband in every household in America by the year 2007. And there's ways to do that with the Government having to provide all the capital. We ought not to tax access to broadband. If you want something to flourish, don't tax it.

As well we've got to make sure that regulatory policy in Washington is conducive for the spread of broadband. For example, one of the things that's probably going to need to be done is they're going to need to build towers on Federal lands in order for over-the-air Internet services to work out into the remote regions of our country. They don't need a bunch of paperwork and hassle in order to build the tower on Federal lands. There's a lot of things we can do to reduce the bureaucratic hurdles necessary to make sure that broadband is plentiful, and not only plentiful but there's competition so that you get better quality and better price.

But today we're going to talk about a third avenue that's—to make sure America is innovative and is a leader in the world, and that is how to make sure our health care system works better. And there are some fantastic ideas as to how to do that.

The way I like to kind of try to describe health care is, on the research side, we're the best. We're coming up with more innovative ways to save lives and to treat patients. Except when you think about the provider's side, we're kind of still in the buggy era. I told a story yesterday of a guy in Kalamazoo, Michigan. His young daughter has a case of leukemia, and he had to—she had to see a lot of specialists. But he had to carry her files around every time she saw a specialist in order to expedite care, to make sure she was getting the best care.

And the health care industry is missing an opportunity, if patients, in order to make sure they get quality care, have to carry files from one specialist to the next. It's like IT, information technology, hasn't shown up in health care yet. But it has in one place, in one department that you're about to hear from, and that's the Veterans Department.

So here's what we're here to talk about. We're here to talk about how to make sure the Government helps the health care industry become modern in order to enhance the quality of service, in order to reduce the cost of medicine, in order to make sure the patient, the customer, is the center of the health care decisionmaking process.

And we've made great progress. There's a role for the Federal Government. One thing is, the Federal Government has got to make sure the privacy rules are strong. You're going to hear us talk about electronic medical records, and that's exciting. But it's not so exciting if you're a patient who thinks somebody could snoop on your records, to put it bluntly. I'm not interested in having my—well, it's too late for me. *[Laughter]* My medical records are pretty well known.

But for those people—there's a lot of people in America who say, "Good. I want there to be good information technology in the health care field. I just don't want somebody looking at my records unless I give them permission to do so." And I fully understand that. No, your records are private if that's the way you want them to be, but there's the ways to address this, the privacy issue. And there's the ways to make sure that the Federal Government's role is helpful in expanding information technology, and that's what we're going to talk about.

Tommy Thompson is the head of the—the Secretary of Health and Human Services—is a strong advocate about the spread of IT throughout the health care industry. I think he's got—I know he's got the proper perspective of the role of the Federal Government in encouraging not only the Federal agencies but the private sector to adopt these strategies in a way that is positive for the American consumer and cost-beneficial for society.

You'll hear him talk about standards. I told him when he starts talking about standards, "Make sure it's the kind of language we all understand." See, that's part of the problem. The medical terminology is really different from English, and it's different from one office to the next. And so when Tommy is talking about standards, I think he'll help you understand how we can help with standards.

At any rate, we're doing some smart things at the Federal Government, and the Federal Government can lead because we're spending a lot of money in health care. We're a large consumer on behalf of the American people. Think about it: Medicare, Medicaid, veterans' benefits, Federal employee health insurance plans. I mean, there's a lot of money going through the Federal Government, and therefore it provides a good opportunity for the Federal Government to be on the leading edge of proper reform and change.

Tommy, thanks for your service. Let her go.

[Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy G. Thompson made brief remarks.]

The President. Thanks, T, good job. It's estimated that they spend \$8,000 per worker on information technology in most industries in America, and \$1,000 per worker in the health care industry. And there's a lot of talk about productivity gains in our society, and that's because companies and industries have properly used information technology. If properly used, it is an industry-changer for the good. It enables there to be a better cost structure and better quality care delivered, in this case in the health field.

And yet the health care industry hasn't touched it, except for certain areas. And one area that has is the Veterans Administration.

You're about to hear an example from our Secretary and the administrator of this hospital and the assets here in Baltimore about forward thinking by people who care about the patients they serve. I know the veterans who are here are going to be proud to hear that the Veterans Administration is on the leading edge of change. That's what we expect. The taxpayers' money is being well spent.

And one of the reasons why the Veterans Administration is doing so well in changing, kind of, behavior, as well as making sure the backlog for veterans cases has been reduced, is because of our Secretary, a Vietnam vet, a really decent guy, and who is doing a fabulous job, Tony Principi.

[*Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thanks. I'm real proud of the job that you're doing here. Our job is to set the strategy. Smith's job here is to make sure they put it in place. [*Laughter*] Dennis Smith, as I've told you, runs the show here. Tell us how this happened. I mean, first of all, how long have you been working for the Veterans Administration?

Dennis Smith. Thirty-one years.

The President. Thirty-one years?

Mr. Smith. Yes, sir.

The President. You don't look that old. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Smith. Thank you.

The President. Maybe because you don't spend a lot of time in Washington. [*Laughter*] Explain your job, explain what this means—if you can possibly share some stories with us. You're doing a great job, by the way.

[*Mr. Smith, Director, VA Maryland Health Care System, made brief remarks.*]

The President. I presume it's cost effective?

Mr. Smith. It is.

The President. I mean, think about a system where you had to take each individual X-ray and put it in a shelf and get somebody to take it out of the shelf and put it back in the shelf and probably had to duplicate it just in case somebody wouldn't lose it. So when you hear him talk about cost-effective-

ness and productivity increases, this is what we're talking about. This system, when it gets advanced beyond the VA, will save American consumers a lot of money. If we're wise about how we use technology, we can save money.

Anyway, sorry to interrupt. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Smith. That's quite all right. [*Laughter*]

The President. The man knows the chain of command. [*Laughter*]

[*Mr. Smith made further remarks.*]

The President. Let me ask you, was it hard to get all the records computerized in the first place? I mean, somebody is listening out there who is running a hospital in Dallas, Texas. Are they going to say, "Gosh, this is such an overpowering startup that it makes no sense to do so?"

Mr. Smith. Well, with the VA, we kind of started years ago with this. We started with physician-order entry. And we had packages. We had a lab package. So we brought lab on board, where the physicians would order their lab work, and that would be automated. And then we went to various other systems. So it was gradual that we did it. It is a daunting task for the hospital sector to bring in a computerized medical record all at one time. So no doubt, but it has to be done, Mr. President. We have to do it.

The President. The goal I set is, most people ought to be covered within a 10-year period. It's not like in 10 days or 10 months. This is something that is going to take time to get there.

Tell me about the pharmaceuticals, the distribution of drugs, the barcoding, and how that affects—

[*Mr. Smith made further remarks.*]

The President. How do you deal with the privacy issue? In other words, there's some suspicious character around that doesn't—

Mr. Smith. Well, the nurses all have codes to get into the system, so you have to have a security code to get in. So before—you can't just go up to a computer. We have these on medication cards, laptops, so they have to type in a code to get into it. So we know—the system knows that, if I was a nurse, Dennis Smith is in the system. And I'm visiting

Mr. Principi in his room and click on, it will know that I'm administering the drug and who the patient is. It brings all that up. It's a very secure system. We've built security into this.

The President. Good. You're doing a great job.

Mr. Smith. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thanks a lot. One of the things that's interesting, one of the challenges we face in our society—Governor Ehrlich understands this—is we've got to make sure we train people in the health care field who understand what they're doing when it comes to computers and information technology. There's a lot of jobs available in the health care field, and the community college system turns out to be a great laboratory for enhancing people's skills. And I appreciate your support of the community colleges here in Maryland, giving people a chance to learn a new skill to meet the challenges of the—when I say, “challenges of the 21st century,” here's one: Figure out how to use IT in a constructive way to save costs and improve quality care and to save lives. I suspect 20 years ago people who were in the health care field simply could not envision the use of computers and broadband and the Internet to make the field modern. And our education system has got to reflect that, Governor. I appreciate your understanding.

So far you've only heard from the public sector. It probably makes sense to hear from the private sector today as well, since the delivery of health care in the private sector is equally if not greater part of people's—the quality of medicine here in the country.

Johns Hopkins is one of the really great hospital university systems in America. It's world renowned, and it's quality care. With us today is Marlene Miller—Dr. Marlene Miller, I might add. She is in charge of the office of quality and safety initiatives at Hopkins. Tell us what that means, and just give us a sense of the challenges you face and the challenges we face in encouraging the spread of information technology to the private sector. Is Hopkins involved with any of this, or anything else you want to say?

[Dr. Marlene Miller, Director, Quality and Safety Initiatives, Johns Hopkins Children's Center, made brief remarks.]

The President. Yes, see, the VA has got an advantage because all the administrators work for the same outfit, the same organization. Hopkins stands alone. I suspect Hopkins doesn't do a very good job of conversing with M.D. Anderson in Houston. Two different languages—no, anyway. [Laughter]

And so the real challenge in the private sector is to take what the Johns Hopkins people have done intrahospital and have it be able to converse with both large and rural hospitals all across America. And that's where the Federal Government can help, like the development of standards. I guess you support the development of standards when it comes to talking over the Internet?

Dr. Miller. Absolutely.

The President. What other challenges do you see?

[Dr. Miller made further remarks.]

The President. Let me ask you something. Are you saying that these systems are able to build in a kind of a safety valve—in other words, automatically kick out a prescription if it doesn't meet the logic of the computer program?

Dr. Miller. One aspect of an ideal system, in my mind, is if I prescribe you 50 milligrams of something, but the 10 prior visits I prescribed you 5, I should get a warning flag, and say, “Look, do you really mean this?”

The President. But what you said about the weight, something—

Dr. Miller. Well, it's the same issue in children.

The President. If you've got small children, it is illogical to prescribe this much dosage.

Dr. Miller. Yes, the prescription I talked to you about was an adult-sized dose. No one, had they looked in any textbook, would have ever given that child that dose.

The President. Pretty good. That's why you've got to get the standards right, Tommy.

[Secretary Thompson and Secretary Principi made brief remarks.]

The President. This is a big challenge for us here in the country. Think of what we're talking about. We're just talking about how hospitals talk to each other. Then we've got

to get it so the docs are able to talk to each other, and they've got to buy into this.

And so the reason why we've started this process now is we want to encourage insurance companies and State Governments, doctors organizations, AMA and others, to understand the great benefit for the American people by implementing information technology in the health care field.

By introducing information technology, health care will be better, the cost will go down, the quality will go up, and there's no telling whether other benefits will inure to our society. In other words, when we get this done—and we will, because America is a land of doers and entrepreneurs; our job is to set the goal and then to encourage and incent people to achieve the goal—but when we get this implemented, America will remain on the leading edge of technological change. This is the kind of innovation that's practical and makes sense, that will keep us to be the leader in the world.

And when we're the leader of the world, it means our people have a chance to make a better living. See, when you're the leader, particularly when it comes to innovation and technology, your society improves a lot. The quality of life goes up. People's pay goes up. People in America are more likely to realize the American Dream. It's essential that we be in a society of innovators and change, and this is an area where there is a huge opportunity.

And I look forward to working with people to achieve this objective. I want to thank those up here who are doing a good job. Tony, you all have made us proud. I'm giving Tony the credit, but you deserve it. [*Laughter*]

Marlene, thank you for your vision. We look forward to working with Johns Hopkins as to how—to better learn how to encourage implementation of this opportunity. And when we get it done—we will—we will—this is America, after all. [*Laughter*] And when we get it done, we'll all be able to say, "We've done our duty, job well done. Now we go on to the next issue after this." But let's get this one right.

Thank you all for coming. We've enjoyed it. I hope you found it as interesting as I have to listen to the great opportunities in

front of us, some of the challenges that have been overcome, and recognizing that we've got other challenges to overcome. But our spirits are high. Our spirits are high because this country can overcome any challenge in our way.

God bless. Thank the healers who are here. God bless the veterans as well.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:50 p.m. at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich of Maryland, his wife, Kendel, and their newborn son, Joshua; former Gov. William Donald Schaefer of Maryland; George W. Owings, secretary-nominee, and Lawrence J. Kimble, acting secretary, Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs; and Nelson J. Sabatini, secretary, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Executive Order 13335—Incentives for the Use of Health Information Technology and Establishing the Position of the National Health Information Technology Coordinator

April 27, 2004

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and to provide leadership for the development and nationwide implementation of an interoperable health information technology infrastructure to improve the quality and efficiency of health care, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment. (a) The Secretary of Health and Human Services (Secretary) shall establish within the Office of the Secretary the position of National Health Information Technology Coordinator.

(b) The National Health Information Technology Coordinator (National Coordinator), appointed by the Secretary in consultation with the President or his designee, will report directly to the Secretary.

(c) The Secretary shall provide the National Coordinator with appropriate staff, administrative support, and other resources to meet its responsibilities under this order.

(d) The Secretary shall ensure that the National Coordinator begins operations within 90 days of the date of this order.

Sec. 2. Policy. In fulfilling its responsibilities, the work of the National Coordinator shall be consistent with a vision of developing a nationwide interoperable health information technology infrastructure that:

(a) Ensures that appropriate information to guide medical decisions is available at the time and place of care;

(b) Improves health care quality, reduces medical errors, and advances the delivery of appropriate, evidence-based medical care;

(c) Reduces health care costs resulting from inefficiency, medical errors, inappropriate care, and incomplete information;

(d) Promotes a more effective marketplace, greater competition, and increased choice through the wider availability of accurate information on health care costs, quality, and outcomes;

(e) Improves the coordination of care and information among hospitals, laboratories, physician offices, and other ambulatory care providers through an effective infrastructure for the secure and authorized exchange of health care information; and

(f) Ensures that patients' individually identifiable health information is secure and protected.

Sec. 3. Responsibilities of the National Health Information Technology Coordinator.

(a) The National Coordinator shall, to the extent permitted by law, develop, maintain, and direct the implementation of a strategic plan to guide the nationwide implementation of interoperable health information technology in both the public and private health care sectors that will reduce medical errors, improve quality, and produce greater value for health care expenditures. The National Coordinator shall report to the Secretary regarding progress on the development and implementation of the strategic plan within 90 days after the National Coordinator begins operations and periodically thereafter. The plan shall:

(i) Advance the development, adoption, and implementation of health care information technology standards nationally through collaboration among public and private interests, and consistent with current efforts to set health information technology standards for use by the Federal Government;

(ii) Ensure that key technical, scientific, economic, and other issues affecting the public and private adoption of health information technology are addressed;

(iii) Evaluate evidence on the benefits and costs of interoperable health information technology and assess to whom these benefits and costs accrue;

(iv) Address privacy and security issues related to interoperable health information technology and recommend methods to ensure appropriate authorization, authentication, and encryption of data for transmission over the Internet;

(v) Not assume or rely upon additional Federal resources or spending to accomplish adoption of interoperable health information technology; and

(vi) Include measurable outcome goals.

(b) The National Coordinator shall:

(i) Serve as the Secretary's principal advisor on the development, application, and use of health information technology, and direct the Department of Health and Human Services' health information technology programs;

(ii) Ensure that health information technology policy and programs of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are coordinated with those of relevant executive branch agencies (including Federal commissions) with a goal of avoiding duplication of efforts and of helping to ensure that each agency undertakes activities primarily within the areas of its greatest expertise and technical capability;

(iii) To the extent permitted by law, coordinate outreach and consultation by the relevant executive branch agencies (including Federal commissions) with public and private parties of interest, including consumers, providers, payers, and administrators; and

(iv) At the request of the Office of Management and Budget, provide comments and advice regarding specific Federal health information technology programs.

Sec. 4. Reports. To facilitate the development of interoperable health information technologies, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall report to the President

within 90 days of this order on options to provide incentives in HHS programs that will promote the adoption of interoperable health information technology. In addition, the following reports shall be submitted to the President through the Secretary:

(a) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management shall report within 90 days of this order on options to provide incentives in the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program that will promote the adoption of interoperable health information technology; and

(b) Within 90 days, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly report on the approaches the Departments could take to work more actively with the private sector to make their health information systems available as an affordable option for providers in rural and medically underserved communities.

Sec. 5. Administration and Judicial Review. (a) The actions directed by this order shall be carried out subject to the availability of appropriations and to the extent permitted by law.

(b) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity against the United States, its agencies, its entities or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
April 27, 2004.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., April 29, 2004]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on April 30.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Goran Persson of Sweden and an Exchange With Reporters

April 28, 2004

President Bush. Okay, listen. There will be two opening statements. We'll answer a couple of questions. We'll alternate an American—not yet, a couple of opening statements. Thank you.

Welcome. Mr. Prime Minister, thanks for coming. We just had a really good discussion about common opportunities. The Prime Minister has got a clear vision about freedom and opportunity, and he's an optimistic person. He's optimistic that by working together we can achieve great things in the 21st century. We had a good discussion about bilateral relations. I reminded him there's a lot of Swedish Americans who are really proud of their heritage, proud of their home country.

So Mr. Prime Minister, welcome back. Thanks for your time. Thanks for your consideration.

Prime Minister Persson. Thank you, sir. And let me also underline that we have had a very fruitful discussion, not least with the background to improve, strengthen the transatlantic relations between U.S. and Europe. It's not only about security and foreign policy; it's also about economic relations and international cooperations, not least inside multilateral structures like United Nations. With that as a framework, we have covered a discussion about Iraq, Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the situation in Afghanistan, also North Korea and European matters.

And thank you, Mr. President, for receiving me. As always, frank and friendly discussion.

President Bush. Frank and friendly. Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press].

Situation in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, is it going to take an all-out military offensive to put down the insurgency in Fallujah? And can you really have a successful transfer of power in 60 days if Iraq is wracked by violence?

President Bush. First, we will have a successful transfer of power. I assured the Prime Minister that the June 30th date is a solid date, and I appreciate so very much the work by the United Nations and Mr. Brahimi to lay the groundwork for the transfer of sovereignty.

Secondly, I have laid out a broad strategy that says that Iraq will be as secure as possible, that we will deal with those who want

to stop the march to freedom. And that's exactly what's happening in Fallujah. Our commanders on the ground have got the authorities necessary to take action to help the Iraqi people realize a free and peaceful society.

And what you must realize is happening in a place like Fallujah is, the closer we come to passing sovereignty, the more likely it is that foreign fighters, disgruntled Ba'athists, or friends of the Shi'a cleric will try to stop progress. That's what's happening. They want to kill innocent life to try to get us to quit. And we're not going to. And our military commanders will take whatever action is necessary to secure Fallujah on behalf of the Iraqi people.

I'm pleased to—I had a meeting with General Abizaid today. He's the commander in charge of the theater. He was reporting that there will be joint patrols with Iraqi police in Fallujah. Most of Fallujah is returning to normal. There are pockets of resistance, and we will—our military, along with Iraqis, will make sure it's secure.

Swedish Detainee in Guantanamo Bay

Q. Mr. President, what will happen to the Swedish prisoner at Guantanamo Bay?

President Bush. The Prime Minister—the first matter he brought up was the Swedish prisoner. He was very forthright, very frank, and very concerned about the prisoner. I told him we want to work closely with our friends. We have done so with other countries, and we will do so with Sweden. There is a delegation coming over so that we can fully understand the facts and the consequences, but the Prime Minister made it clear he expects this to be resolved. I made it clear to him we want to work with him.

I think that's an accurate statement.

Prime Minister Persson. It is.

Q. How do you comment on that, Persson?

Prime Minister Persson. I think it's necessary to have that time to reply, because he has been there for 2 years. He should be released or brought to trial. That is the two alternatives, and we need to come to an end with this discussion, and I've expressed it clearly and had good response from the President.

President Bush. Adam [Adam Entous, Reuters].

Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States

Q. Yes, thank you, Mr. President. What does Vice President Cheney bring to your 9/11 testimony that you couldn't provide alone? And don't you owe history and the 9/11 families a transcript or a recording?

President Bush. What he's asking about is a meeting I'm going to have tomorrow morning, talking with this 9/11 Commission about—my attitude and the attitude of the Vice President about our country, our security, what happened on that particular date, what happened leading up to that. And I look forward to the discussion. I look forward to giving the Commissioners a chance to question both of us. And it's a—it will be an ample—it will be a good opportunity for these people to help write a report that hopefully will help future Presidents deal with terrorist threats to the country.

Prime Minister Persson. The Evening Star.

President Bush. Evening Star? [Laughter] I've never ever heard a leader call a reporter a "star"—[laughter]—except what I call Roberts [John Roberts, CBS News]. I call him a star.

Discussions With Prime Minister Persson

Q. Mr. President, you're a Republican and our PM is a Social Democrat. What do you have in common? What do you not have in common?

President Bush. First of all, we have the ability to not talk politics but talk policy. We've been given great responsibilities, and we spend a lot of time talking about our mutual desire for the world to be peaceful. And we understand that free societies are peaceful societies.

One of the great things about the Prime Minister is—I don't want to put words in his mouth; he can correct me if I'm wrong, but nevertheless—he has this great sense of optimism that people want to be free and that people have the ability to self-govern. And to me, it's a wonderful spirit, and it gives us a chance to share our strategies about how to spread freedom.

We talked about a lot of issues. We talked about the plight of the people in North Korea and the danger of the dictator in North

Korea. We talked about the Palestinian/Israeli issue. I reminded him that I was the first President ever to articulate the vision of a Palestinian state. No other President has ever done that. I was pleased to do so because I believe that is the best hope for the Palestinian people and the best way to promote peace.

But no, our discussions—we don't spend any time on politics, you'll be happy to hear. We spend time on what's best for our respective countries and how we can work together.

Prime Minister Persson. We talked about all people's freedom and peace in the whole world, and then we touched upon some specific issues that is of mutual interest to us. We can discuss that because we are both democrats, and we are both strongly in favor of freedom and building democratic institutions. That what's—is what we have in common. And then, also, we realize that Europe—and Sweden is a part of Europe—and U.S. are interdependent and we need each other for the future good development in the world.

President Bush. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Adviser to the U.N. Secretary-General; Muqtada Al Sadr, Iraqi Shiite leader whose militia engaged in an uprising in Iraq in early April; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Statement on the United Nations Security Council's Resolution on Weapons of Mass Destruction

April 28, 2004

Last September, I called on the United Nations Security Council to urge the cooperative action of all U.N. members against the illicit trafficking of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. I commend today's unanimous Security Council resolution, which answers that call.

It now remains for all member states to act on the measures urged by this resolution. Member states should enact strict export controls, criminalize the proliferation of

weapons of mass destruction, and secure all related materials within their borders.

Today's resolution is an important achievement. We must continue to press these efforts to ensure that the world's most destructive weapons are kept from the world's most dangerous regimes and organizations.

Remarks Following a Conversation With the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States and an Exchange With Reporters

April 29, 2004

The President. The Vice President and I just finished a good conversation with the 9/11 Commission. It was wide ranging. It was important. It was just a good discussion, and I appreciate the members.

I want to thank the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for bringing the Commission here and giving us a chance to share views on different subjects. They had a lot of good questions. I'm glad I did it. I'm glad I took the time. This is an important Commission, and it's important that they ask the questions they ask so that they can help make recommendations necessary to better protect our homeland. It was—I enjoyed it.

Let me ask—answer a couple of questions.

President's Meeting With the 9/11 Commission

Q. Mr. President, what topic did the Commissioners want to spend most of the time on? And were there any subjects that you didn't answer or were advised by your Counsel not to answer?

The President. No, I was never advised by my Counsel not to answer anything. I answered every question they asked. Really—probably best that I not go into the details of the conversation. Let them incorporate into their report. There was a lot of interest in—about how to better protect America. In other words, they're very interested in the recommendations that they're going to lay out, and I'm interested in those as well.

And we discussed a lot of things, Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press], a lot of

subjects, and it was a very cordial conversation. I was impressed by the questions, and I think it helped them understand how I think and how I run the White House and how we deal with threats.

John [John King, CNN].

Joint Appearance With Vice President Cheney

Q. Mr. President, as you know, a lot of critics suggested that you wanted to appear jointly with the Vice President so that you two could keep your stories straight, or something—

The President. Yes.

Q. —can you tell us what you think of the value of appearing together and how you would answer those critics?

The President. Yes. First of all, look, if we had something to hide, we wouldn't have met with them in the first place. We answered all their questions, and as I say, I think I—I came away good about the session, because I wanted them to know how I set strategy, how we run the White House, how we deal with threats. The Vice President answered a lot of their questions—answered all their questions. And I think it was important for them to see our body language as well, how we work together.

But it was—you know, the Commissioners will speak for themselves over time. They will let you know whether they thought it was a fruitful series of discussions. I think they did. I think they found it to be useful.

Yes.

Transcript

Q. Mr. President, don't you think that the families deserve to have a transcript or to be able to see what you said?

The President. Adam [Adam Entous, Reuters], you asked me that question yesterday.

Q. I'm hoping for an answer today.

The President. I've got the same answer. Yes.

Al Qaida

Q. Mr. President, can you say with any confidence that there are no Al Qaida operatives active in the country today?

The President. No, I can't say that.

Q. Did the Commission ask you about that?

The President. No, they didn't. But I'm not going to get into any more details about what they asked me. I told you I wasn't going to get into details about what they asked me, and then I just fell into your trap.

But no, let me talk about vulnerabilities, and then I've got to get back to work. We are still vulnerable to attack. And the reason why is, Al Qaida still exists. Al Qaida is dangerous. Al Qaida hates us. And we have to be correct 100 percent of the time in defending America, and they've got to be right once. And therefore, we are vulnerable.

But people need to know, we're working—we, the government, at all levels—are working long hours to protect America. We're doing the best we can. The best way to secure America, however, is to stay on the offensive and bring those people to justice before they harm America again. And that's what we're continuing to do. But yes, so long as there's an Al Qaida enemy that is willing to kill, we are vulnerable.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:16 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas H. Kean, Chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, Vice Chairman, National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Statement on Senate Action on the Proposed "Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act"

April 29, 2004

I commend the Senate for moving forward to expand access to broadband technology. The "Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act" is an important step toward permanently banning access taxes on broadband that will help make high-speed Internet services more affordable, increase the number of broadband users, and enhance our Nation's economic competitiveness.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Paul Martin of Canada

April 30, 2004

President Bush. The Prime Minister and I will have some opening comments. We'll answer two questions per side.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. I'm glad you're here. I've really been looking forward to this meeting because I view it as a meeting between friends and allies.

I really appreciate the Prime Minister's clear vision about the world in which we live. He understands the danger of terror. He understands the opportunity of trade, and he understands that we share values that will—that are so important, the values of freedom, human dignity. We care about the human condition. I appreciate your concern about working together to help heal those who hurt, provide medicines for those who suffer from a disease.

We've got a good friend in Canada. It's an important relationship. It's a crucial relationship, and it's one that I look forward to continuing to nurture with this Prime Minister.

Welcome.

Prime Minister Martin. Well, thank you, Mr. President. We really did have a very, very good discussion. We discussed a wide range of areas, and we're going to continue over lunch. And we're doing it within the context of our shared values and the fact that we share much more than a continent. We talked about national security and Canada's new national security policy, which makes it very clear that we're going to defend the northern half of North America, and we recognize our responsibility to those in the United States, with whom we share the continent.

We discussed a number of issues between us. We talked about—we talked about the whole question of BSE, mad cow, and I must say that the President was very encouraging. We also—

[At this point, the Prime Minister spoke in French, and no translation was provided.]

We talked about Haiti. We talked about a wide range of issues. And I must say, Mr.

President, that it's very clear that Canada and the United States, working together, we can make great progress.

Situation in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, 134 soldiers have died in Iraq this month, more than any other month. A year after you declared an end to major combat, are things getting worse in Iraq rather than better?

President Bush. First, any time you talk about somebody who died in Iraq or in Afghanistan is a moment for me to thank them and their families for their sacrifice. And their sacrifice will not go in vain because there will be a free Iraq. And a free Iraq is in the interests of our two nations. A free Iraq is in the interests of world peace, because free societies do not harbor terrorists, free societies do not threaten people or use weapons of mass destruction.

Q. Mr. President—sorry.

President Bush. A year ago, I did give the speech from the carrier, saying that we had achieved an important objective, that we'd accomplished a mission, which was the removal of Saddam Hussein. And as a result, there are no longer torture chambers or rape rooms or mass graves in Iraq. As a result, a friend of terror has been removed and now sits in a jail. I also said on that carrier that day that there was still difficult work ahead.

And we've faced tough times in Iraq, Mr. Prime Minister. We've had some tough times. We've had some tough fighting, because there are people who hate the idea of a free Iraq. They're trying to stop progress, because they understand what freedom means to their terrorist ambitions.

And so we're making progress, you bet. There's a strategy toward freedom. One of it, of course, is to continue to deal with those who are trying to stop the Iraqi people from realizing their ambitions of a free society. Whether it be in Fallujah or elsewhere, we will deal with them, those few who are stopping the hopes of many.

There's a political strategy, and the Prime Minister and I will talk about that over lunch, Mr. Brahimi's mission of putting together an entity to which we will transfer sovereignty. No, there is a strategy that will help us achieve the objective, which is a free and

peaceful country in the heart of the Middle East that is desperate for freedom and democracy and peace.

Mad Cow Disease

Q. Mr. President, you're a rancher. Is there any hope—what hope can you offer your fellow ranchers in Canada about when the border might be open to live Canadian cattle?

President Bush. As soon as possible. My administration is committed to a policy of free trade when it comes to beef. And we had a discussion about that today with—that subject today with our respective agricultural ministers or secretaries, as we call them here. And I assured the Prime Minister, I want to get this solution—this issue solved as quickly as possible. And it's in our nations' interests that live beef be moving back and forth. It's also in the interest to make sure we make decisions based upon sound science, which he fully understands.

Q. Mr. President—

President Bush. Hold on a second. Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Treatment of Iraqi Prisoners

Q. What is your reaction to photos of U.S. soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners? How are you going to win their hearts and minds with these sort of tactics?

President Bush. Yes, I shared a deep disgust that those prisoners were treated the way they were treated. Their treatment does not reflect the nature of the American people. That's not the way we do things in America. And so I—I didn't like it one bit.

But I also want to remind people that those few people who did that do not reflect the nature of the men and women we've sent overseas. That's not the way the people are—that's not their character—that are serving our Nation in the cause of freedom. And there will be an investigation. I think—they'll be taken care of.

Canada's Role in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, could you tell us what you'd like to see Canada doing on Iraq, both diplomatically and in terms, eventually, of getting possibly police and troops on the ground there?

President Bush. My first answer to that is, I want to Canada to do what it feels comfortable doing in Iraq. That's—and that's what I've told the Prime Minister before. Canada is an independent nation. Canada makes—will make its decisions based upon her own judgment. The Prime Minister shares my deep desire for there to be peace in the world, and to the extent that the country feels comfortable in helping that, we're grateful.

Canada is doing a lot in Afghanistan. Canada is doing a lot in Haiti. Canada is a contributor to reconstruction in Iraq. And I am grateful to be able to talk to a friend who shares the same goal, which is affecting behavior in a way that's based upon our values of human rights, human dignity, and freedom. And we've got no better partner in understanding the power of free societies.

There's a lot of people in the world who don't believe that people whose skin color may not be the same as ours can be free, can self-govern. I reject that. I reject that strongly. I believe that people who practice the Muslim faith can self-govern. I believe that people whose skins aren't necessarily—are a different color than white can self-govern.

And the Prime Minister—I don't want to put words in his mouth—but I think he shares that great sense of optimism and possibility. And it's good to have a friend who shares that with us.

Would you like to have the First Ladies come on up?

Prime Minister Martin. I've got to say, though, I really do like sharing a press conference with you. You answer those questions perfectly. [Laughter]

President Bush. Thank you. Record that.

[At this point, a question was asked and answered in French, and no translation was provided.]

Prime Minister Martin. If you can give me just two seconds, I'm going to translate. They want it.

President Bush. Some of these guys understand French. [Laughter] Raise your hand, Gregory [David Gregory, NBC News]. [Laughter]

[Prime Minister Martin provided a French translation.]

President Bush. Listen, thank you all.

Come on up, Laura.

Mrs. Martin. How do you do?

Prime Minister Martin. Good to see you.

Mrs. Bush. Prime Minister, welcome. I'm so glad you're here.

Q. Will the next trip be down at the ranch, Mr. President, for the Prime Minister?

President Bush. This is a nice place, but the ranch is even nicer. [Laughter]

Q. You need to teach him to ride. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Martin. I'll invite him to the farm.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:53 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Adviser to the U.N. Secretary-General; and Sheila Martin, wife of Prime Minister Martin.

Remarks on Signing the Executive Order on American Indian and Alaska Native Education

April 30, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Glad you all are here. Please be seated. Thank you for coming. Welcome. I'm so pleased to have so many distinguished leaders in this historic place. I see a lot of friendly faces here. I want you to know it's a privilege to stand with you as we take an important step toward a shared objective, improving the education of all American Indian and Alaska Native children. That's what we're here to discuss today. It's an important goal.

Two people are going to be important in this, in reaching this goal—we'll reach it, by the way. My attitude is, when America sets a goal and puts our mind to it, we'll meet the goal. And two people that are going to be very important in reaching this goal will be the Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton, and the Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, both of whom have joined me here today. Thank you for coming.

I'm also pleased that we're joined by some mighty distinguished Members of the United

States Congress, two from the Senate and three from the House, starting with the President pro tem of the Senate, Senator Ted Stevens from Alaska—thank you for coming, Senator—a member of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, Senator Craig Thomas from Wyoming—welcome—members of the House Resources Committee—three members are with us today, Ken Calvert of California, Richard Pombo of California, and Dennis Rehberg of the great State of Montana. We're glad you're here. I want to thank you for taking time. These guys are busy people, but obviously, they're committed to this important goal.

I appreciate the tribal leaders who are here. I see leaders from all over the country. I really appreciate you coming to—you honor us with your presence. And you honor us with your strong commitment to making sure that every child learns. It's a really important part of our mutual responsibility, isn't it? When you're a leader, you've got to set important goals and follow through on those goals. And I know you share the same goal I've got: Every child, not just a few, not just some, but every child gets the best possible education. That's what we're here to discuss today.

I want to thank the students who are with me on stage. They've set one standard, and that's the standard of excellence. And they're achieving that. They're scholars, high school scholars, soon to be university and college scholars, who are in town to participate in a science bowl. I told them we need more scientists in the country, and they picked a good area to become an expert, because there's a lot of demand for scientists here in this country that is changing because of technology.

I want to thank the teachers who are here. I appreciate you being a teacher. You know, Senator, you might not remember, but I was the Governor of Texas once. Well, of course, you remember, what the heck am I thinking. [Laughter] But my predecessor was Sam Houston. He was a Senator, a Congressman; he was the President of the Republic of Texas. It's a pretty big deal when you're the President of the Republic of Texas. He was the Governor of Texas. They asked him the most important thing he ever did in his life.

He said, "Teacher." He didn't hesitate. He said, "Being a teacher." So for those of you who are teachers here, thank you for being compassionate citizens who care deeply about the students of our country.

We place a high value on education because we understand the importance of education to our future and the importance of education to tribal nations. It's really important we get it right. In the words of the late Sam Ahkeah, the former chairman of the Navajo Nation Council, "We must encourage our young people to go into education. We need thousands of young lawyers and doctors and dentists and accountants and nurses and secretaries," is what he said. You can't be one of those unless you're educated, if I could paraphrase what this great leader said. His vision was clear. And that's what we're here to talk about today, to make sure all our visions are clear, starting at the Federal level.

His commitment to education has been shared by American Indians and Alaska Natives through the generations. Today his granddaughter, Sharon, is with us. Where are you, Sharon? Sharon, thanks for coming. There's nothing better than being a relative of a famous person. *[Laughter]* Sharon is a leader here in Washington, DC, following in her granddad's footsteps. So thanks for being here. Welcome.

To improve education for children of every background, I was honored to sign what has been called the No Child Left Behind Act. This law challenges what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. In other words, sometimes people walk into a classroom and see a child and say, "Well, gosh, that child can't learn." That's the lowest of low expectations. This law basically says we've got a different mindset in America. We believe every child can learn and expect every child to learn. That means we've raised standards for every child, not just a few.

You know what happens when you have low expectations and low standards? People just get simply shuffled through the system. And you know who gets shuffled through, the so-called "hard to educate," the isolated, the inner-city child. That's not good enough for America, and this law changes that attitude. We've spent more money at the Fed-

eral level. But now, for the first time, we're asking the question, "Can you show results?" If you expect every child to learn to read and write and add and subtract, if you believe every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract, it makes sense for people to show us whether or not every child is meeting those goals.

The No Child Left Behind Act challenges the soft bigotry of low expectations because it helps raise the bar, and it helps identify problems early, before they're too late. A terrible problem we have at times is that a child can't learn to read early, doesn't learn to read early, and just gets moved through the system. And then they come out of their schools, and they can't read at all. And we've got to stop it now, before it's too late. And the No Child Left Behind Act does that.

The No Child Left Behind Act is meant for every student, not just a few. It's going to improve the lives of our American Indian children and Alaska Native children. It is an important part of making sure we have a hopeful future.

It's also very important that we have people who work hard to make sure the No Child Left Behind Act works. One way to do so is for there to be teacher training. You see, if we expect children to learn to read and write, we've got to use curriculum that work, and therefore, we need people who know how to teach the curriculum that works.

An accountability system, by the way—I recognize sometimes people fear it, but my attitude is, how do you know whether or not you're succeeding unless you measure? Or how do you know whether the curriculum you're using works unless you measure? It's not worth guessing anymore as to whether or not something that you've got in place is working. We need to know, see. And one of the things—we're learning how best to teach, and we need people to teach the teachers how to teach.

And Marilyn Nichols is with us today. Where are you, Marilyn? Oh, there you are. Thanks for coming. Marilyn is a—she leads an intertribal teacher training program in the Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. She's really making a profound difference in a lot of people's lives by using her skills to train teachers on how to

teach. In other words, the effort has got to be more than just measuring; the effort has got to be a unified effort to help teachers follow their hearts and to help make sure that every student has got a qualified teacher in their classroom. I really want to thank you for what you're doing. I appreciate your soul. I appreciate your hard work. I also appreciate your clear vision.

And today I'm going to sign an Executive order that will build on the No Child Left Behind Act. First, I want to thank the tribal leaders who have been involved with the writing of this order. Secondly, an Executive order is, when it's signed by the President, means something. At least it does when this President signs it. *[Laughter]* My order establishes a Federal working group, cochaired by Secretaries Norton and Paige, with this specific mission: to help American Indian and Alaska Native children meet the standards set by the No Child Left Behind Act.

This is an important mission. It's an important mission that will call together elements of our Government to put forth a strategy. This Commission will consult closely with tribal leaders. See, we believe people closest to the problem are those that can help designate the solutions to the problems. It will meet with members of my National Advisory Council on Indian Education, who were sworn in by Secretary Paige this morning. And thank you all for coming.

The Executive order calls on Secretary Paige to develop recommendations to improve the teaching of reading. I'll never forget when I was the Governor of Texas, and a woman—I was speaking in Houston—a woman walked up and said, "Reading is the new civil right." It's a powerful statement, when you think about it, isn't it? "Reading is the new civil right." If we're interested in civil rights and human condition and human improvement, our kids have got to learn to read. And there needs to be a focused strategy to make sure that that happens—that that happens.

We've got to strengthen early childhood education. What that means is, the best place to start is early in a child's education. The truth of the matter is, the first teacher a child has is a mom or a dad. And we want our parents to understand how important it is to

read to their children. But we also want the education system to focus early in a child's education. We want them reading. We want to dash the false expectations that certain children can't learn to read.

We want to improve preparation for college and the workforce. We want there to be high high school graduation rates. In other words, we're going to raise the standards. That's what this Commission is going to do. It's going to work with the leadership to say, "How can we work together to raise the standards and expect the best?"

Under this order, Secretaries Norton and Paige will organize a national conference to discuss ways to meet our goal. In other words, there's not going to be just a group of people huddled in Washington. We're going to call in citizens and get input. We want what they call community buy-in. We want people understanding the mission. We also want to make sure we achieve high academic achievement while maintaining the strong and vibrant tradition of cultural learning. Learning to read and honoring a culture go hand in hand; they're not mutually exclusive. And that's an important part—*[applause]*.

I told you I'm an optimistic person. I believe when America sets a goal and puts our mind to it, we can achieve those goals. I also know that every parent of every heritage shares the great dream of a better life for their children. It's a common dream we all have, and it's an important dream to recognize as real in all communities. We will continue the Federal Government's longstanding commitment to the sovereignty of American Indians and Alaska Natives. And we will continue our government-to-government cooperation as we work to meet this very vital goal.

So thank you for coming. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share some thoughts with you. And thank you for witnessing the signing of this Executive order. For those who are part of the authorship, I appreciate your input. I appreciate your willingness to make your views known.

And now I'm going to sign this Executive order. And if the Members of the Congress would like to come up and serve as witnesses, I'd be honored.

[At this point, the President signed the Executive order.]

The President. Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Executive Order 13336—American Indian and Alaska Native Education

April 30, 2004

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and to recognize the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students consistent with the unique political and legal relationship of the Federal Government with tribal governments, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Purpose. The United States has a unique legal relationship with Indian tribes and a special relationship with Alaska Native entities as provided in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, and Federal statutes. This Administration is committed to continuing to work with these Federally recognized tribal governments on a government-to-government basis, and supports tribal sovereignty and self-determination. It is the purpose of this order to assist American Indian and Alaska Native students in meeting the challenging student academic standards of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107–110) in a manner that is consistent with tribal traditions, languages, and cultures. This order builds on the innovations, reforms, and high standards of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, including: stronger accountability for results; greater flexibility in the use of Federal funds; more choices for parents; and an emphasis on research-based instruction that works.

Sec. 2. Interagency Working Group. There is established an Interagency Working Group on American Indian and Alaska Native Education (Working Group) to oversee the implementation of this order.

(a) The Working Group's members shall consist exclusively of the heads of the execu-

tive branch departments, agencies, or offices listed below:

- (i) the Department of Education;
- (ii) the Department of the Interior;
- (iii) the Department of Health and Human Services;
- (iv) the Department of Agriculture;
- (v) the Department of Justice;
- (vi) the Department of Labor; and
- (vii) such other executive branch departments, agencies, or offices as the Co-Chairs of the Working Group may designate.

A member of the Working Group may designate, to perform the Working Group functions of the member, an employee of the member's department, agency, or office who is either an officer of the United States appointed by the President, or a full-time employee serving in a position with pay equal to or greater than the minimum rate payable for GS–15 of the General Schedule. The Working Group shall be led by the Secretaries of Education and the Interior, or their designees under this section, who shall serve as Co-Chairs.

(b) The function of the Working Group is to oversee the implementation of this order. The Working Group shall, within 90 days of the date of this order, develop a Federal interagency plan that recommends initiatives, strategies, and ideas for future interagency actions that promote the purpose, as stated in section 1, of this order. In carrying out its activities under this order, the Working Group may consult with representatives of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and organizations, in conformity with Executive Order 13175 of November 6, 2000, and with the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE). Any such consultations shall be for the purpose of obtaining information and advice concerning American Indian and Alaska Native education and shall be conducted in a manner that seeks individual advice and does not involve collective judgment or consensus advice or deliberation.

Sec. 3. Study and Report. The Secretary of Education, in coordination with the Working Group, shall conduct a multi-year study

of American Indian and Alaska Native education with the purpose of improving American Indian and Alaska Native students' ability to meet the challenging student academic standards of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

(a) The study shall include, but not be limited to:

- (i) the compilation of comprehensive data on the academic achievement and progress of American Indian and Alaska Native students toward meeting the challenging student academic standards of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001;
- (ii) identification and dissemination of research-based practices and proven methods in raising academic achievement and, in particular, reading achievement, of American Indian and Alaska Native students;
- (iii) assessment of the impact and role of native language and culture on the development of educational strategies to improve academic achievement;
- (iv) development of methods to strengthen early childhood education so that American Indian and Alaska Native students enter school ready to learn; and
- (v) development of methods to increase the high school graduation rate and develop pathways to college and the workplace for American Indian and Alaska Native students.

The Secretary of Education shall develop an agenda, including proposed timelines and ongoing activities, for the conduct of the study, and shall make that agenda available to the public on the Internet.

(b) The Secretary of Education, in coordination with the Working Group, shall issue a report to the President that shall:

- (i) provide the latest data available from the study;
- (ii) comprehensively describe the educational status and progress of American Indian and Alaska Native students with respect to meeting the goals outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and any other student achievement goals the Secretary

of Education or the Secretary of the Interior may deem necessary;

- (iii) report on proven methods for improving American Indian and Alaska Native student academic achievement; and
- (iv) update the Federal interagency plan outlined in section 2(b) of this order.

Sec. 4. *Enhancement of Research Capabilities of Tribal-Level Educational Institutions.* The Secretary of Education and the Secretary of the Interior shall consult with the entities set forth in section 2(a) of this order and tribally controlled colleges and universities to seek ways to develop and enhance the capacity of tribal governments, tribal universities and colleges, and schools and educational programs serving American Indian and Alaska Native students and communities to carry out, disseminate, and implement education research, as well as to develop related partnerships or collaborations with non-tribal universities, colleges, and research organizations.

Sec. 5. *National Conference.* The Secretary of Education and the Secretary of the Interior, in collaboration with the Working Group and Federal, State, tribal, and local government representatives, shall jointly convene a forum on the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to identify means to enhance communication, collaboration, and cooperative strategies to improve the education of American Indian and Alaska Native students attending Federal, State, tribal, and local schools.

Sec. 6. *Administration.* The Department of Education shall provide appropriate administrative services and staff support to the Working Group. With the consent of the Department of Education, other participating agencies may provide administrative support to the Working Group, to the extent permitted by law and consistent with their statutory authority.

Sec. 7. *Termination.* The Working Group established under section 2 of this order shall terminate not later than 5 years from the date of this order, unless extended by the President.

Sec. 8. *Consultation.* The Secretary of Education and Secretary of the Interior shall consult the Attorney General as appropriate

on the implementation of this order, to ensure that such implementation affords the equal protection of the laws required by the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution.

Sec. 9. General Provisions.

(a) This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not, create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity, by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

(b) Executive Order 13096 of August 6, 1998, is revoked.

George W. Bush

The White House,
April 30, 2004.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register,
8:45 a.m., May 4, 2004]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 5.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

April 24

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

April 25

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

April 26

In the morning, the President traveled to Minneapolis, MN. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Putin of Russia to discuss the upcoming D-day anniversary celebration in France and the situations in

Iraq, the Middle East, and the Republic of Georgia. He then had a telephone conversation with King Abdullah II of Jordan to discuss King Abdullah's upcoming visit to Washington, DC. Later, he had an intelligence briefing. Upon arrival in Minneapolis, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Melissa DuBose.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Edina, MN, where he attended a Victory 2004 luncheon at a private residence.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Diplomatic Reception Room, he participated in a photo opportunity with the 2003 and 2004 national ambassadors for the March of Dimes.

The President announced his intention to nominate James David McGee to be Ambassador to Madagascar.

The President announced his intention to nominate David Michael Satterfield to be Ambassador to Jordan.

April 27

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Secretary of State Colin L. Powell.

Also in the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Thaksin Chinnawat of Thailand to express his appreciation for Thailand's support in Iraq and to discuss the situations in Iraq and Burma.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Baltimore, MD. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

April 28

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing followed by a National Security Council meeting. Later, he met with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

In the afternoon, in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the President dropped by a White House briefing for regional church pastors.

April 29

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joyce A. Barr to be Ambassador to Namibia.

The President announced his intention to nominate William R. Brownfield to be Ambassador to Venezuela.

The President announced his intention to nominate June Carter Perry to be Ambassador to Lesotho.

The President announced his intention to nominate Charles P. Ries to be Ambassador to Greece.

The President announced his intention to nominate R. Barrie Walkley to be Ambassador to Gabon and to Sao Tome and Principe.

The President announced his intention to nominate Edward Brehm to be a member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation.

The President announced his intention to designate JoAnn Johnson as Chairman of the National Credit Union Administration Board.

The President announced his intention to designate Jack Martin as Acting Director of the Selective Service System.

The President announced his intention to designate Linda Morrison Combs as Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Transportation.

The President declared a major disaster in New Mexico and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on April 2–11.

April 30

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He also had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to discuss efforts to settle the conflict in Cyprus.

In the afternoon, in the Residence, the President had lunch with Prime Minister Paul Martin of Canada. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with President Oscar Berger of Guatemala.

The President announced his intention to appoint Frances Fragos Townsend as Assistant to the President and Homeland Security Advisor.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted April 26

James D. McGee, of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Madagascar.

John D. Negroponte, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Iraq.

David Michael Satterfield, of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Withdrawn April 26

Bradley D. Belt, of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Social Security Advisory Board for a term expiring September 30, 2008, vice Stanford G. Ross, term expired, which were sent to the Senate on September 3, 2003, and January 21, 2004.

Submitted April 29

Joyce A. Barr, of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Namibia.

Edward Brehm, of Minnesota, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation for a term expiring November 13, 2007, vice Cecil James Banks, term expired.

William R. Brownfield,
of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

June Carter Perry,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Charles P. Ries,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Greece.

R. Barrie Walkley,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Gabonese Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released April 26

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Train Accident in North Korea on April 22

Released April 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Released April 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: President Bush Signs Biodefense for the 21st Century

Released April 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to New Mexico

Released April 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1274, H.R. 2489, H.R. 3118, and H.R. 4219

Acts Approved by the President

Approved April 30

H.R. 1274 / Public Law 108–221

To direct the Administrator of General Services to convey to Fresno County, California the existing Federal courthouse in that county

H.R. 2489 / Public Law 108–222

Cowlitz Indian Tribe Distribution of Judgment Funds Act

H.R. 3118 / Public Law 108–223

To designate the Orville Wright Federal Building and the Wilbur Wright Federal Building in Washington, District of Columbia

H.R. 4219 / Public Law 108–224

Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2004, Part II